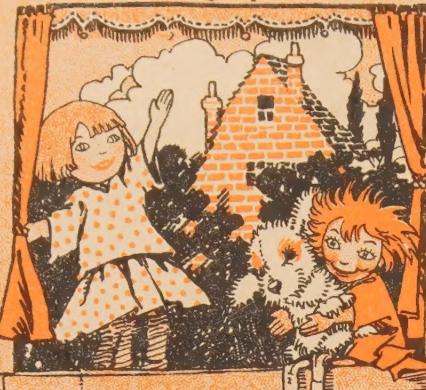


# BLACKIE'S CHILDREN'S ANNUAL



L. Hocknell.

ESTABLISHED  
1904



BLACKIE  
AND SON'S  
GREAT  
ANNUAL  
SHOW



THIS BOOK  
BELONGS TO  
Dorothy Brierley,  
Christmas 1923.

FROM DADDY & MOTHER.







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MOUNTAIN MAIDENS

# BLACKIE'S CHILDREN'S ANNUAL

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20th YEAR

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# SHORT STORIES

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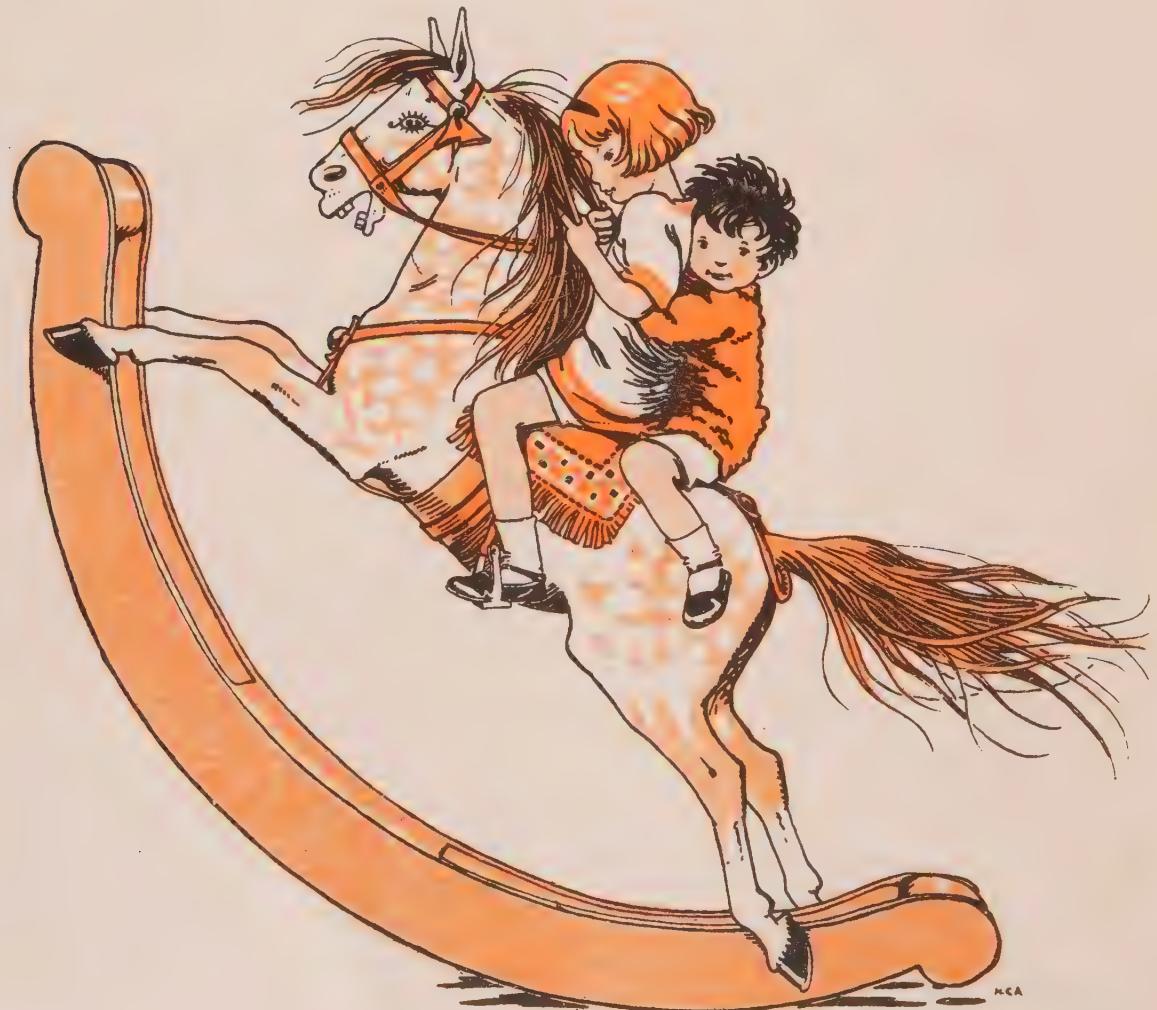
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# After The Party

by

Madeline  
Barnes





## AFTER THE PARTY

**J**AMES, Cynthia, and Enid were to Be Quiet, to make No More Noise.

It was Uncle who said so. He came out of the library and walked and strode along. The ends of his moustache turned up, and the corners of his eyes turned down; and he talked. He spoke to the three of them in little sentences that went deep inside their ears, and trickled coldly down their backs afterwards. And he pressed an electric bell till other people came, and he gave orders. Several orders. All of them about how James and Cynthia and Enid were to *be quiet*.

Uncle had no spurs to go jingly-clink to-day, and no sword either, and his coat was only the friendly old smoky one with ink-

## After the Party

spots on it—but James and Cynthia and Enid all felt as if they were to be taken out and shot at dawn.

They wilted.

It was not until they had crept and crawled off to another part of the house that they began to talk and defend themselves. They still felt very flabby indeed.

“Dothe he thuppothe—” Cynthia began; then she altered it to “If he thuppotheth—” and even to “If he *finkth* we are able to thtay quiet for ever—” before she gave up trying to find words she could say easily. (It wasn’t lisping. Cynthia was wearing a little gold plate with a band round two crooked little teeth for a while, and she often tried to find words that she could say easily—though James liked it best when she was not able to find them.)

“We did make rather much noise,” Enid said. “It was because you thought of the gong. That’s why.”

Such a lovely game it had been—exactly like a real Fire! (And the library door *had* a curtain over it and was a very *thick* door too.) There was the small rolled-up garden hose ready to be fixed; a long step-ladder for a fire-escape; and the beating gong for a loud warning as the fire-engine rushed to get there in time.

Out of the way! Hurry—Hurry—Hurry——!

Then from behind the thick and curtained library door had appeared—Uncle, and everything had altered and become flat and doleful again. Just as it had been all the morning nearly.

“He needn’t have reminded us about the party,” said Enid. “We didn’t ask him to give a party while we were staying here.”

James considered this. He was “fair” to everybody. Sometimes Enid found him aggravatingly so.

“We liked it yesterday,” he said.

## After the Party

“Well—yes!” Enid was forced to admit this was true. Still she added rather sadly: “To-day’s different!”

And indeed yesterday had been fun. Carpets rolled up. Furniture carried away. Pretty lantern shades over the plain electric lights. Flowers and plants in pots brought indoors out of the big green-house.

The floor so slippery as never was. And yet the better for a little more sliding and polishing before the other children came to dance.

Three clever ladies—with black and gold frocks, and bobbed hair, and eye-glasses—tuning up; and a clever man—with bobbed hair too, but he wore spectacles instead of eye-glasses—striking notes at the big piano, and talking and arranging; all of them very musical indeed.

Enid in pale-green silk, and Cynthia in embroidered muslin, and James in his usual suit with an extra-special collar, and the children from miles and miles round all carefully got ready, had danced and danced for hours.

As for refreshments—Ah! They were not just the usual things at parties. They were perfectly astonishing.

The melting pâtés and the *creamy* creams, and the fizziness of the cool-tasting fizzy glasses. Grown-up coffee had been all ready for anyone who liked it. There were little tables and dear little plates. You could choose and choose again. There were tiny crackers with the most charming surprises in them. And still the music went on, and the pretty programmes grew full of scribbled names, as Enid and James and Cynthia and all the children from miles and miles round danced and danced and danced.

That was yesterday!

It was how this uncle always did things, if he did them at all. Like a magician. With a telephone and a cheque book. And

## After the Party



They were perfectly astonishing

next day always everything had vanished and everywhere was as before.

And James and Cynthia and Enid must—Be Quiet.

So they *had* been at first. They had been quiet enough all the morning. Tired and mournful and good. Then suddenly, in the middle of the afternoon, they had started feeling naughty and lively and extremely cheerful. Ready for extraordinary fun, but not in the least ready for everyday amusements and walks.

This explains the Fire game, which they would never have thought of trying, with Uncle in the library, if it hadn't been the day after the party.

## After the Party

Now they had been fearfully rude, and also ungrateful for Uncle's kindness.

And *still* they could not settle down to an ordinary afternoon!

"Uncle's a nathty unkind thing, ithn't he?" said Cynthia.

Enid did not reprove Cynthia for this speech. She was yawning again.

James stood on the hearthrug and looked as much like Uncle as he could, without a moustache. He began to imitate him *exactly*, while Enid giggled and Cynthia squealed. James could imitate people very well. Sometimes he did it a little too long. When the others were limp and helpless with laughing aches he started to be Enid—Enid *most* grown-up and charming at the dance, talking to the Johnstone boy with his first high collar.

Cynthia giggled this time, but Enid got a pile of magazines and sat down to read. Next James started imitating Cynthia and the gold-plate-



He began to imitate him *exactly*

## After the Party

talking. Cynthia giggled a little less. Suddenly she rushed to the hearthrug.

“Thtop, Jimmy!” she cried, and she slapped James as hard as she could.

Then she began sobbing.

James stopped. He grew huffy. He shrugged his shoulders in a very superior way, and chose a magazine from Enid’s heap and sat down and began to read too.

Cynthia knew he was behaving extremely well—considering the slap—and she felt more annoyed with him than before. She wandered about the room and made teasing remarks. When nobody took any notice she was more annoyed then ever. By and by she wandered out at the door.

James went on reading.

Enid went on reading.

There was silence.

(Surely Uncle would have been pleased to see them. Surely he would.)

Aha! What means this scamper along the passage? Who is this rushing into the room?

’Tis Cynthia!

A very scared-looking Cynthia too, who clapped her hands with impatience and turned wildly. “Come and thtop it, Jimmy,” she cried. “Come and thtop it!” and rushed away again.

James looked up. What was he to stop this time? Enid jumped out of the cosy low chair. Her mind flew off to gas taps, and water taps—things of that sort. *All* of them turned on, and *none* of them turned off! “She’s frightened, Jimmy! What *has* she done?” exclaimed the big sister. Then she rushed and ran too. James got up and slowly followed.

## After the Party

He followed into the drawing room (which was over the library).

Cynthia was prancing in despair before a quaint old carved cabinet. Slowly and surely and distinctly and unceasingly *out* of this cabinet *into* the room, and louder and louder and louder, came a long and never-ending tune. Trills and gurgles and ripples of music.

James stared.

"What have you done now, Bobbetts?" he asked.

Cynthia seized his hand.

"Jimmy," she said imploringly. "Oh, lithten! I only *just* looked at it—and turned one or two *little* handleth. It' th broken really. Uncle thaid it wouldn't play. You *know* he thaid it wouldn't."

"But it *is* playing," said James.

It was indeed.



The more he turned the louder the musical box played

## After the Party

"Oh, what a loud noise!" Enid said.

Just then the old musical box gave a sort of creakkk—crawkkkk. After that it started a truly majestic tune. Trumpetings—and bugle calls—and brazen chords—and long trampling bangs.

"Oh—now it's going to be even louder!" gasped Enid.

She was right.

James turned all sorts of handles. There were several. The more he turned the louder the musical box played.

Even anybody's *Mother* would think it an unnecessary thing to have done. As for what an *Uncle* would think—more especially an Uncle who had ordered quiet not half an hour ago—it was too terrible to imagine!

At that moment Uncle had finished writing. He was doing mental arithmetic. Cynthia's age and Enid's age and James's age. And his own. He added up and subtracted. Next he decided that Enid wasn't a quarter as old as he was. Neither was James. As for Cynthia, it was a very easy sum to do! Perhaps, he said to himself, they couldn't be quiet. Not all the time. They were not staying much longer. He would prefer them to be happy till they went away. Then he lighted a long cigar, and telephoned, and pressed another electric bell and gave some more orders, and went to look for them all three.

And through the ceiling and down the stairs and along the passages as he went, rose and swelled and poured forth volumes of sound. NOISE. And these volumes of sound didn't stop. It was rather like a gramophone record that never came to an end.

Enid met him. She was rushing to look for help. By this time she had begun to feel exactly as if a frozen pipe had burst, or as if every one of the bathroom taps wouldn't be turned off. The noise must be stopped. The house would be *soaked* with rushing

## After the Party

music. Uncle in the library down below would be swamped.

Stop it—stop it—

And here *was* Uncle.

“Oh, Uncle!”

Said James in a hurry: “Er—we’ve started it somehow, Uncle, and now we can’t stop it again.”

“All right, James,” said Uncle. “All right, Enid.”

“No!” said Cynthia, out loud. “*I* did it. Nobody elthe.” Her teeth chattered together just then, or perhaps it was only the little gold plate.

“All right, Cynthia,” said Uncle.

Creakkk—crawkkkk. And now more slowly and surely than ever there began, “God Save the King”.

Uncle took his hands out of his pockets and his cigar out of his mouth and stood upright without thinking. They all stood and listened. Would it stop now? It would *have* to stop now! No. Very briskly that long-ago musical box went on to play a strange little dance tune.

And Uncle danced! He took hold of Cynthia’s hands and went round and round and hummed the tune as he went.

But Cynthia had begun to cry.

“Oh, Uncle!” she sobbed. “I thought you would be angry again. *I did!*”

Uncle rose to the occasion. He patted Cynthia’s back, and wiped her eyes with a big silky handkerchief. (Such a different Uncle as he was at the end of an afternoon’s writing, from the Uncle in the middle of it!) Once again he pressed an electric bell.

“Tea,” he said. “In the library. At once. Bread and butter—no cake.” The musical box played and played. “After tea,” went on Uncle, “we’ll have games. Any you like to choose. You will all have a very little dinner with me at seven o’clock, and I

## After the Party

am taking you all to the play this evening for a final treat. Tomorrow you will get up at the usual time." He stopped talking, and the musical box gave a most joyful Tra-la-la, La-la-la, over and over and over again.

"Thank you, Uncle," said James.

"Oh, thanks so *very* much, Uncle!" said Enid.

(They meant about the theatre.)

Cynthia stood on tip-toe. "You did say *all*, didn't you?" she asked. (She knew she'd heard it in spite of the music, but still——)

Uncle nodded. He was busy turning handles.

"Thtoop down, Uncle," said Cynthia.

She kissed him twice, with a very big hug.

"All right, eh, Cynthia?" said Uncle again.

And just at this moment the musical box decided to—Be Quiet.

*Madeline Barnes.*





# "First catch your HARE"

By  
FRANK  
HART.

HERE goes a hare! Look! over there!

Why, Billy's put her up—  
Quite pleased to find himself so smart  
For but a two-months' pup!

See how he runs and tears along.  
He thinks it's frightful fun!  
But long before the hare is tired  
Our Bill will be quite done!

He'll squat him down and worry out,  
With such a puzzled air,  
The fact that such a hound as he  
Could go and miss a hare!





He took three small pieces of wood

## THE MONEY-MAKER

LONG, long ago, before the history book begins, there lived three men: Om the hunter, Zog the tiller of the soil, and Blab the maker of clothes.

Now these three men were of a peaceable mind, and agreed to exchange the products of their work, Om supplying the meat, Zog the corn, and Blab the clothes, and for some time the arrangement worked well. Then came a morning when Om, bearing a haunch of elk, appeared before the cave of Zog.

“Good morning, farmer,” said he; “I want corn, and here is a nice fresh piece of elk.”

“Hum,” said Zog, “I would gladly give you corn, but the difficulty is I am not in want of meat. We have not finished the

## The Money-Maker

boar yet; it is tough eating, and will last us some days. Come back in a week's time."

So Om had to return to his cave without any corn.

On the same day, the wife of Zog, while scaring the birds from the corn, had to climb a tree in a great hurry to escape from a wild beast, and in doing so, tore her skirt to pieces.

So Zog the farmer took some corn, and went to the cave of Blab who made clothes.

"That wife of mine has torn her skirt," said he; "give me a new one and take this corn."

"Ha," exclaimed Blab, "I have just finished the most perfect model; it is made of rushes, plaited in a new pattern."

"That will do," remarked Zog gruffly. "Here is the corn!"

"Pardon me," said Blab, rubbing his hands with a smile, "the fact is I do not need any corn to-day; we have found some nuts, and are saving the corn we last had, until the nut season is over."

Zog frowned, but saw no way out of the difficulty, and returned home, taking his corn with him.

Blab, who was at the time in need of meat, took the new skirt under his arm, and presented himself before the cave of Om the hunter.

"Good morning, hunter; I have brought with me the most beautiful skirt I have ever made!" And he held it up with an artist's pride. "I shall want much meat for it," he added. "I hope you are well supplied."

"I have plenty of elk meat, fresh and juicy," growled Om, "but my wife has a skirt, and she shall not have two if I know it. Take it away at once before she sees it, or——"

Here he raised his club so threateningly that Blab, who was a small man, deemed it wise to take the shortest way home, carrying his skirt with him.

## The Money-Maker

Thus a sad state of things prevailed. Om had no corn to make bread to eat with his meat, Blab had no meat, and worse than all, the wife of Zog could not go out because she had nothing to wear; and this made things very unpleasant for the farmer.

Now, they meant well, so they all met together to consider what could possibly be done to arrange the exchange of their goods.

Tailors are very intelligent people, and it was Blab who found the key to the puzzle.

He took three small pieces of wood of the same size, and on each he made a mark with a sharp flint. Then he handed a piece to the farmer and a piece to the hunter.

“Now,” said he, “when I want corn, I will give Zog my piece of wood in exchange.”

Of course trees were many and wood plentiful, and Zog gave a hearty laugh.

“You will get no corn out of me,” he chuckled, “even if you bring a tree with you.”

“Stay,” urged Blab, “you have not heard all. If you bring me the piece of wood I have given you, I will hand to you at once the beautiful skirt I have just made!”

Both Zog and Om stared at him.

“Is the wood magic?” inquired the hunter.

“I believe you are making game of us,” remarked Zog, beginning to look unpleasant.

“Try it, my friend!” responded Blab nervously.

“Here then,” growled the farmer, and he held forth the piece of wood.

To his amazement, Blab placed in his hands the new skirt without a word.

A piece of wood for a skirt, the thing must be magic! And Zog gazed at the wood he had parted from, with fas-

## The Money-Maker

cinated eyes. "Give me another piece of wood," he demanded.

"No, no," said Blab; "it was a bargain."

"Blab speaks truth," put in Om the hunter; "it was a bargain. But listen, Zog. I will give you my piece of wood for some corn!"

"Done," said the farmer eagerly, and the exchange was made.

But no sooner had Om received the corn, than he too regretted the loss of his piece of wood.

"Blab, my friend," said he, "did you not come to me for meat? There is a nice piece of elk that you may have for a piece of your magic wood!"

"I do not know that I want it now," remarked Blab, remembering his hasty flight. But noticing the scowl gathering on Om's face, he added: "But as you are my friend, I will give you a piece of the magic wood when you bring the meat."

So Om received his corn, Blab his meat, and Zog's wife her skirt, and yet each man still had a piece of the magic wood.

So this—or something like it—was the way in which the first money came to be invented, though, as pieces of wood were clumsy, small metal coins took their place in after years.

*R. de M. Rudolf.*

## THE FAIRIES' WASHING-DAY

ON washing-day in Fairyland,  
I've often heard it said—  
On washing-day in Fairyland  
The spiders spin a thread.  
They let it run from bush to bush,  
And make it firm, no doubt,  
And then the fairies gaily come,  
And hang their washing out.

*Sheila Braine.*



THE DREAM SHIP



# THE GREEN SHOES



OREEN was only a little Irish peasant girl who lived in a smoky cabin, and helped her grandmother to rear fowls and fatten pigs for market—but she had the most beautiful hair in the world. It was so beautiful that when she opened her thick plaits, the dazzle of it would bring the birds flying down from the tree-tops, and the rabbits bobbing up from their burrows to peep at her.

One day as she sat at the cabin door, plaiting her long hair, she was startled to hear a sharp little voice speak her name, and there, close to her, stood a little man, no bigger than a foxglove, and dressed all in green from his long pointed shoes to his peaked cap.

“The top of the morning to you,” said Noreen politely. The



Close to her stood a little man, no bigger than a foxglove

## The Green Shoes

little man sat down upon an over-turned flower-pot and opened his wallet. He drew out a golden spinning-wheel no larger than a thimble, and a pair of golden scissors, which he offered to Noreen.

“I am the Queen’s mantle-maker,” said he, “and if you will give me a strand of your hair, I shall weave you a ribband to bind it.”

Noreen did as she was asked, and in a trice the little man had spun the lock of hair she gave him, into a ribband as bright as a sunbeam, and as delicate as gossamer.

“To-night when the moon is full the Queen gives a state ball,” said the mantle-maker. “She has commanded a mantle as bright as a sunbeam, and as delicate as gossamer. Sell me some of your hair, little girl, and I shall give you whatever you most desire.”

Now Noreen wanted a pair of shoes, to dance in on the village green on fête nights, so she allowed him to cut off a great sheaf of her hair. When she looked up again he was gone, but there, where he had stood, lay the prettiest pair of dancing-shoes she had ever seen.

That night the old grandmother beat the little girl because she had let the fire out, and the porridge grew cold. But Noreen did not care. She could only think of the green shoes. Next morning her grandmother beat her again because she had forgotten to shut up the hens, and they had laid away. But still Noreen could think of nothing but the green shoes.

During the weeks that followed she sang about her work, and on every holiday she danced them all to a standstill on the village green. There was none to hold a candle to her when she laced the fairy shoes on her feet and went twinkling over the smooth turf. People whispered that Noreen was become the grand dancer entirely.

Only the old grandmother grumbled.

Noreen sang at her work, but somehow the work was no longer well done. The hens laid away; the pigs were forgotten and grew contrary; the porridge went off the boil, or the fire went out, and

## The Green Shoes

never was there a dry stick to be found in the stick-house.

"Arrah, be good to us," said the old woman, "what has come to the house?"

Then one evening, as Noreen unlaced the green shoes, she saw the full moon come sailing over the tree-tops, and she thought of the little old mantle-maker, and wondered if the Queen were wearing her mantle for the ball that night. In the morning when she rose, and went to peep at the green shoes, they were gone, and in their place lay two green acorns.

Now, the wonder of Noreen's dancing was talked of far and near, and the Lord of the Castle had commanded that she should dance at a banquet he was giving to his tenantry on Midsummer's Eve. When Noreen saw the acorns she was frightened, for she knew that without the fairy shoes she could never dance before the great Lord and his guests. When she had fed the pigs she tied the acorns carefully in her apron, and climbed the hill-side to where a spring bubbled in the sunshine. Seated there, she laid the acorns in her lap and fell to weeping.

Presently a shrill little voice asked her why she wept, and there, seated under a furze-bush, was the little old mantle-maker.

"I have lost my green shoes," said the little girl.

"Sure, 'tis a pity," said the little green man, "but there's others where those came from. The youngest Princess is about to be married, and the Queen has commanded a robe of state. Sell me your hair and you shall have your green shoes."

So Noreen bent her head. But when she felt the scissors touch her neck she cried out, and clutched her hair. But it was too late. Down fell the great waves of gold, and away vanished the little green man like a spark blown up the chimney. And there on Noreen's lap were the green shoes.

The weeks slipped away, and the girl went sadly about her work.

## The Green Shoes



Noreen and her grandmother sat at the feast

She wore a kerchief round her head, and her grandmother never noticed that her plaits no longer glittered in the sunlight.

At last the great day came. The Castle blazed with lights, and rang to the sound of fiddle and flute, and Noreen and her grandmother sat at the feast. Noreen wore her green shoes, and a scarlet kerchief hid her short curls.

After the supper the Lord of the Castle came into the hall. By his side walked his daughter, a little girl of Noreen's own age, with long fair hair that fell to the hem of her silken gown.

When Noreen began to dance everyone fell silent. Light as a will-o'-the-wisp, she flickered over the stone flags as if the very spirit of spring was in her feet. The kerchief fell off, and her short curls bobbed about her face, bound only by her golden ribband.

## The Green Shoes

Suddenly, in the middle of her dance, through the great window above her head, Noreen saw the moon sail into view, full and round like a great golden plate, and there on the window-sill, his golden spinning-wheel beside him, sat the Queen's mantle-maker. Up and up sailed the moon, and Noreen felt her feet grow heavy as lead. Try as she might she could no longer move them. She looked at the little green man and saw that he had drawn a robe of golden tissue from his wallet, and was holding it out for her to see

Only Noreen saw the mantle-maker and the Queen's robe of state. She saw, too, that it lacked a belt.

"Little girl," said the mantle-maker, "the Queen awaits her state robe. There is no more gold to weave a belt. Sell me the ribband on your hair and to-night you shall wear the green shoes."

"Take it," cried Noreen, and she flung the ribband up to the window. It passed like a flash of light over the heads of the people, and they thought a fire-fly had flown into the room.

For one moment Noreen saw the little green man sitting on the window-sill. He held the ribband in his hand, but he was no longer looking at her. He was looking at the little lady, and the long fair hair that fell like a mantle to the hem of her silken robe. Then in a twinkle he was gone, and Noreen felt her feet grow light again.

When the dance was over, and the little lady had kissed Noreen on the cheek, the Castle's Lord presented her with a purse of gold to be her dowry—for never, said he, had such dancing been seen in the length and breadth of Ireland.

But that night the old grandmother beat Noreen soundly for holding traffic with Fairy Folk. For when the kerchief blew off, and she saw the little girl's short curls, she was filled with suspicion—having lived all her own life on an Irish hill-side.

In the morning the green shoes were gone.

*A. M. Westwood.*

## OUR GAME

ALL of us have a lovely game.  
We shut our eyes and wish—  
Wish we could ride an elephant,  
    Or catch a monster fish,  
Or meet a fairy dog with wings,  
    Or wear a golden crown,  
Or own a magic orchard  
    Where you sing and the fruit falls down.

We wish and wish with our eyes tight shut  
    And none of our hopes comes true,  
So I have thought of another plan—  
    It may work because it's new.  
I'll wish for something I'm frightened of,  
    And do not want at all—  
Shall I wish that I am lost in a wood?  
    Or that the house may fall?

My eyes are shut. I wish that I,  
    When I come to the end of the street,  
Just as I turn the corner,  
    An ENORMOUS lion may meet!  
There—don't look so dreadfully frightened;  
    I shan't meet a hero's death,  
'Cos—whisper—before I said *lion*,  
    I said "dandy", under my breath!

*Mary E. Boyle.*



MILDRED R. LAMB.



# THE FIDDLER



ONE fine day the Butts and the Benns went for an outing into the country. There were Mr. and Mrs. Butt and Mr. and Mrs. Benn, and four little Butts and four little Benns, and they all met at the cross-roads, where a wagonette was waiting for them. Mr. Butt and Mr. Benn climbed into the box-seat, and Billy Butt and Bobby Benn squeezed in between them. The driver cracked his whip and off they all started, trailing a cloud of dust behind them.

At half-past twelve they reached a country inn with the sign-board of a yellow dragon hanging above the porch. The dinner was ready for them on a long table indoors: roast lamb and green peas, and new potatoes, and red-currant tart, and cream and custard, and home-made lemonade for the children to drink.

After dinner Mr. and Mrs. Butt and Mr. and Mrs. Benn strolled round the garden, and the children, led by Billy and Bobby, started off down the lane to see what they could find; and they hadn't gone far before they met a small, thin boy with a fiddle in his hand and tears running down his cheeks.

"Oh, poor boy, what is the matter?" said Nancy Benn. The boy looked rather ashamed of himself, and wiped his eyes with his sleeve.

"I was carrying the eggs to market," he sobbed, "and I slipped down and broke them all. We *must* have the money, so I'm going to sell my fiddle instead."

"Can you play it?" said Bobby Benn. The boy smiled through his tears, tucked the fiddle under his chin, and struck up such a lively tune that the children were delighted.

"Come back," they said, "and let the others hear you." And they dragged him to the "Yellow Dragon". He was rather

## The Fiddler



The Dancers

shy, and stood by himself under a tree, but he began to play such a lively dance tune that Mr. Butt and Mrs. Benn started to dance on the lawn, soon followed by Mrs. Butt and Mr. Benn. The children all jigged about, and some other holiday-makers who had come to the "Yellow Dragon" joined in.

As soon as the dance was finished, they called for another, and another, and another, and when they were all tired, and the fiddler's arm ached, everybody gave him some money, more than he would have got for the eggs; so he did not have to sell his fiddle after all.

They made him have tea with them, and when they all drove away, they saw him running off home very happily, with his fiddle under his arm, and the money clinking and jingling in his pocket.

*Jessie Pope.*



Ruth Cobb



Ruth Cobb



## TREE-TOP TALES

### I. THE GRYLL AND THE CHICKADEE

HOW shabby you look by the light of the sun!"  
Said the Gryll to the grey Chickadee;  
"I'm beautif'ly bright, and my colours don't run:  
Please note, I have seven, while you have but one.  
You'd like—would you not—to be me?"

Then the Chickadee answered: "Oh no, not at all!  
You see, you're worth fourpence a feather.  
Though the hunters are out, I am calm and serene:  
*You're* sure to be caught—you're so easily seen—  
While they'll miss little ME altogether!"

# TREE-TOP TALES

## II. THE BLITT AND THE LESSER GAZOO

“You’re getting quite seedy and thin!” said the Blitt  
To the Lesser—or Spotted—Gazoo;  
I’m lovely and plump, and I think you’ll admit  
That I look, as I feel, very happy and fit:  
I can’t say the same, dear, of you!”

Said the wily Gazoo: “There’s a serpent about,  
Which fact will not fill you with rapture,  
And I think—being thin—up a rain-pipe I’ll creep;  
While you—being fat—to the tree-top must keep,  
So *you’ll* be the one that he’ll capture!”

*Maurice Clifford.*



# AN A B C PORTRAIT GALLERY

I LOVE my love with an A,  
Because she's an Artful guesser;  
I love my love with a B,  
Because he's a Big Professor;  
I love my love with a C,  
Because she's so Capacious;  
And I love my love, my love, with a D,  
Because he's Disputatious.

I love my love with an E,  
Because of his queer Expression;  
I love my love with an F—  
He's a Farmer by profession;  
I love my love with a G,  
Because he's Grand and mighty;  
And I love my love, my love, with an H,  
Because she's Highty-Tighty.

I love my love with an I,  
Though he's Impudent and stilted;  
I love my love with a J,  
Because he's just been Jilted;  
I love my love with a K,  
Because he's the King of Ophir;  
And I love my love, my love, with an L,  
Although he's a Lazy Loafer.

# AN A B C PORTRAIT GALLERY

By W. GURNEY BENHAM



A



B



C



D



E



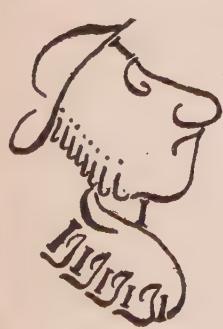
F



G



H



I



J



K



L

# AN A B C PORTRAIT GALLERY

By W. GURNEY BENHAM

M



N



O



P



Q



R



S



T



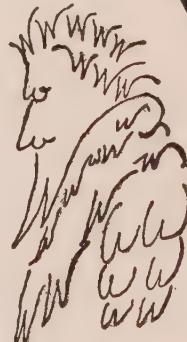
U



V



W



XYZ



W.G.B.

## An A B C Portrait Gallery (*Continued*)

I love my love with an M,  
For her Mewing is soft and pleasant;  
I love my love with an N,  
For there's No time like the present;  
I love my love with an O—  
He's a dear little Orphan fellow;  
And I love my love, my love, with a P,  
For he's Prince of Porto-Bello.

I love my love with a Q,  
Because of his Queer demeanour;  
I love my love with an R,  
Because he's a Reverend Signor;  
I love my love with an S,  
Because he is Sentimental;  
And I love my love, my love, with a T—  
He's a Tricky Oriental.

I love my love with a U—  
His name is Uncle Billy;  
I love my love with a V,  
Because he is Vain and silly;  
I love my love with a W,  
Though he's Wily and Woolly and jealous;  
And I love my love with an X, Y, Z,  
For he's X-cellent, Youthful, and Zealous.

*W. Gurney Benham.*

# THE MAN WHO WOULDN'T BE PLEASED



NCE upon a time there was a man who didn't like rain and hated snow, and who was simply miserable in frosty weather. He didn't like very bright sunshine either, and when it was really hot he said "this climate is awful". In fact, he grumbled all the time, and people were quite tired of him.

But he lived a long time, all the same, and every day he used to grumble at something, and thump the weatherglass which hung in the hall, and be very grumpy all morning. Sometimes, when he got tired of being grumpy in the morning, he'd try being twice as grumpy in the afternoon, but people didn't like that any better—they said it wasn't enough of a change.

After many years the man was just as foolish as ever, and his friends said he was incurable. When they were more annoyed than usual, they called him a pessimist, which means lots of things as well, but is really a man who *never* goes out without an umbrella. One day a great magician met the man, who said to him: "Don't you find this cold very trying?"

"No," said the magician.

"I do," said the man. "Didn't the heat we had last July make you quite limp?"

"No," said the magician again.

"Those March winds are annoying, aren't they?" the man said.

"No," said the magician.

Then the man got quite huffy, and said he had always found people agree with him about the weather. But the magician laughed and said: "That's not because they mean it. Some of them are too polite to contradict, and the rest haven't time to argue

## The Man who wouldn't be Pleased



“I'll make a bargain with you”

with you. But I'll make a bargain with you, if you wish. I can do as I like, and if you know of any place where the weather is always fine, I'll take you there.”

The man was very pleased, and started to think of all the places he knew where the climate is perfect, but of course he couldn't remember a single one. After a long time he asked the magician if it was possible to go *anywhere*, even up to a cloud. “Anywhere,” said the magician; “but if you go up to a cloud you can't get back for three days.”

“I'll pack my bag,” said the man. “There's a fine cloud not far away now, all red and golden and so fleecy and warm. I shan't take my waterproof, as that cloud has a fine southern aspect.”

Perhaps you don't know what that means, but if there's a house for sale near where you stay, it's nearly sure to have a southern aspect, especially if it's a very bad house.

## The Man who wouldn't be Pleased

Very soon the man was in the cloud he had chosen. It was a jolly cloud to look at, but it wasn't comfortable somehow. The man was *very* disappointed. The cloud wasn't red and golden on that side, and it wasn't a bit warm, though it still looked fleecy. It was very moist, and before long the man began to wish he had brought his waterproof. However, he went for a walk round, to keep himself warm, which wasn't so hard till the sun went down. But after dark he was afraid to move in case he should fall off the cloud, and just had to sit still. It was very misty during the night, and the man found himself wet through in no time. But he had to stay that way till morning.

"How fine it will be when the sun comes up!" he thought; but he soon found that it wasn't, for other clouds came up and kept the sun from reaching him. Then he had breakfast, but everything was very wet and sloppy, and long before lunch-time the man leaned over the cloud and called to the magician.

But the magician was busy and took no notice.

"What a lovely place the world is!" thought the man. "How the sun shines and how nice *everything* is! What an *ass* I was to come up here"—and he *shouted* to the magician.

"What's wrong?" said he.

"Everything!" said the man. "It isn't red and golden—it isn't warm and fleecy."

"Well, it *looks* nice from here, and you *would* go, you know. Think of the view, too!"

"That's the worst part of it," said the man. "The view is lovely, only I never knew it till now. Let me down, please!"

"Well," said the magician, "if you promise to remember *that* every time it rains or snows, you may come down."

*J. S. E.*





UNGENTLEMANLY GYP

# UNGENTLEMANLY GYP



NE day Marjorie was busy as usual making things for the dolls. Long ago she had made a nice rug for Gyp's basket, but there were three dolls and a Golly to look after, and only one Gyp, so, of course, poor Gyp got left out most of the time, and he didn't like it.

He watched Marjorie take all the dolls to a nice sunny corner of the lawn and then begin work on a fine new cushion-cover for the Japanese ladies (the ones with black hair). The dolls were tremendously interested, though, being dolls, they didn't say very much, or else they had such little voices that Marjorie couldn't hear them. But she knew they were very pleased, all the same.

Gyp followed, and sat down under the tree with the red flowers. "There she goes!" said he. "If it isn't hats it's frocks, and if it isn't frocks it's cushion-covers for those awful dolls. Suki-San and Pitti-Sing are simply bursting with joy, and that silly Evangeline, with her yellow hair and blue eyes, is too stuck-up for words. I don't mind Golly so much; he's sensible enough to know how silly he looks in those check trousers, and I think he feels it, poor thing."

I'm sadly afraid Gyp was jealous, aren't you?

But really Suki-San *was* dreadfully proud of her blue dress, and Pitti-Sing wasn't modest either—"purple suits me so!" she used to say, just as if everyone else in the world was a perfect fright. Of course, *she* didn't know that Marjorie's mummy bought all the cloth for the dolls' dresses at the autumn sales—dolls mustn't expect to dress in Paris models, you know.

But what really annoyed Gyp was the *side* that Evangeline put on. "You'd think nobody had yellow hair but herself," he used to say. "Now, my colour is far nicer for hair, and the best dogs have

## Ungentlemanly Gyp

brown eyes, though blue ones aren't half bad for dolls, really."

The truth is they were all just conceited, except Golly, and nobody could be conceited in check trousers — really honestly conceited—could he?

"Wouf!" barked Gyp, "I'll settle them," and he made one grab at Evangeline. The Japanese dolls were simply terrified, and looked awfully awkward and silly, especially in their best dresses. Golly got knocked over and could do nothing but stare—of course *he* thought the world had turned upside down. Poor Evangeline was *fearful* when Marjorie rescued her. Her hair was tousled and her face was all red and teary. She didn't look a bit conceited either.

When it was all over, Marjorie said: "I'd no idea you were all *so* vain, and it's simply hateful of you. No wonder poor Gyp was angry. Don't you know that fine dresses don't make *really* nice dolls, or nice girls either? Nothing but old clothes all this week, and serve you right. And Gyp's manners are very bad—he shall have no afternoon biscuits for six whole days. I hope you'll take this dreadful experience to heart, all of you!"

If you've ever heard Daddy speak like that, you'll know that Gyp and the dolls felt it dreadfully.

*William Baily.*





## ◦ THE MILESTONE AND THE ◦ ◦ MOTOR CAR ◦

**J**UST where the high road took the turn and began to curve gently downhill towards the village, stood this milestone. It was one of the old-fashioned kind, a solid, fat little pillar of granite, painted white, and on it in black letters were the words: "Market Singleton, 14 miles", and "Auburn, 1 mile".

It was very old; chips had been knocked out of it by accidents; the frost had made little cracks in it; its white paint was nearly worn off by rain and snow; and dust and mud and weather had done their best to make it dirty and its letters dim.

It was high time that something was done about this poor old stone, for what with its weather-beaten paint, and the grass and moon-daisies that grew around, it was really rather difficult to see, and you might easily pass it unnoticed.

Now one day a very smart and shiny motor-car came purring round the bend; it was a two-seater, with a jolly little dicky-seat

## The Milestone and the Motor-car

behind. The two seats were occupied by a lady and gentleman, and the dicky-seat by their little daughter Beth. Just before the car reached the milestone Beth called to her father:

“Stop here, Daddy! we can have tea under that tree,” for there was a shady old beech tree a few yards away from the milestone. So, as they had a little spirit-lamp, and a kettle and a tea-pot, and tiny cups and saucers, besides tea, sugar, and biscuits, and had been looking out for a cosy spot to rest, Beth’s father steered the car beautifully to the grassy side of the road, and presently they were all three sitting at tea under the friendly beech tree.

Of course the things they talked about were interesting, but I would rather tell you what the milestone and the motor-car had to say. They talked in a whisper that Beth and her parents thought was part of the rustle of the leaves. The motor-car spoke first.

“Still there?” it said.

“My duty is to keep still,” replied the milestone, “and I’ve tried to do it.”

“Poor old thing!” the motor-car retorted in a superior tone. “Mine’s the life! Always on the move, I am seeing new faces and new places. You’d be surprised if you knew how many of you fellows I’ve passed during the year. Thousands!”

The milestone gave a good-humoured chuckle.

“And *you’d* be surprised if you knew how many of you fellows had whizzed past me. I don’t trouble to count them—it’s not my business—but I see them all, and I’m often sorry for them.”

“Sorry for them?” sniffed the car.

“Yes,” the milestone went on. “They’re always in a hurry. They never have time to see anything properly or to make friends. D’you notice that scarecrow in the field behind me?”

“No. Wait a minute. Ah, yes, now I do.”

“You’d have missed even seeing him if I hadn’t mentioned

## The Milestone and the Motor-car

him. And you've no chance of getting to know him. They're shy fellows, scarecrows, through knowing that they are expected to be rather frightening, and though he might perhaps wave to you as you passed, you'd have to settle here for a long time before he'd take you into his confidence."

"His confidence? Hardly worth having, is it? Now I met a big touring-car the other day who had travelled right across the Continent. *He* had plenty to talk about."

"Yes, I dare say," went on the milestone pleasantly, "but my friend the scarecrow assures me that the Continent now would be far too quiet for *him*. You see, the greater part of him—his jacket and trousers—did their bit in the war. Great tales he has to tell!"

The motor-car was silent for a moment, thinking.

"Now you know it never occurred to me," he said at length, "to expect adventure yarns from a scarecrow. But after all, we're rather tired of war stories, aren't we? I confess I like to hear something of fashionable life—society—town—and so forth. Some of us cars are quite 'in the swim', as they say."

"As to that," the milestone answered, "my friend wears an opera-hat that had two very brilliant London seasons."

"Upon my word, old stay-at-home!" the motor-car laughed, "you have me at every turn. But surely you'll admit that some people like me just because I'm always 'on the go'."

"Of course they do—just as they like me for being always in one place. Folks who come along and look at me say one of two things. Either they exclaim: 'Well, we've done one mile anyhow!' or else 'Hurrah, only another mile to go!' And in both cases they give me a kindly glance and pass on their way happy."

"I must say this for you," the motor-car said, for he was a pleasant creature, and fair-minded, "you do your job well. You're always here when anybody looks for you."

## The Milestone and the Motor-car

"It's not difficult, of course. I just have to stand still."

"And you always do. As for me—to be frank, I must confess that sometimes I decline to move when I ought!"

"I don't wonder. I should hate to have to rush about. Patience—that's what is expected of a milestone—patience, and a bold statement of the truth. Speed is your strong point."

The motor-car spoke thoughtfully. "I'm glad we've had this little chat. Very likely when I'm older I may envy you your steady job. We motor-cars are not so long-lived as you milestones. The rush of life tells on us. Deary me, fancy growing so old and shaky that one likes the milestones behind better than those in front!"

"You'll pass many of my relations before your day is done," said the milestone gravely. "It fills me with pride to think of them standing at attention—at correct intervals—all over the country, never moving, and telling travellers what they want to know."

"I dare say I shall have news of them to give you. You've made me realize that we motor-cars and milestones ought to be better friends."

A shadow seemed to fall across the blurred inscription on the old stone—perhaps it was cast by a gently waving branch of the tree, but his voice was a little sad when he spoke again.

"I may be gone before you return. I don't speak quite so plainly as I used, and I'm afraid that for years I've been slowly sinking into the earth. When they put me on duty here first, I was far taller than I am now—and wasn't I smart in my new black and white!"

"They'll paint you again, perhaps," said the car. "When we cars grow old they paint us up and call us new again."

"No," the milestone answered, "they've decided to replace me by one of the new iron kind; probably my successor will be more accurate than I: and I dare say he will tell how many miles to London as well as to Auburn and Market Singleton."

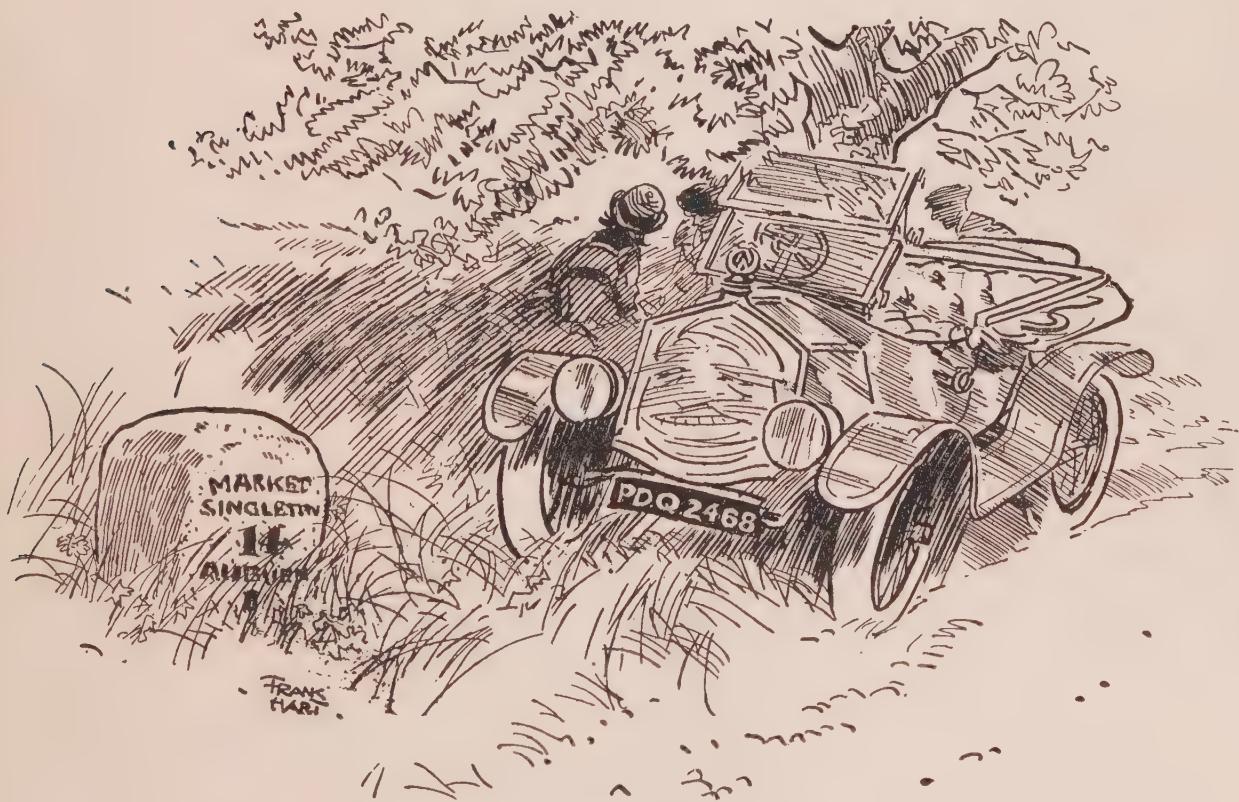
## The Milestone and the Motor-car

"A little absurd, isn't it?" the motor-car said. "Seems to me like showing off his knowledge. I shall snub the fellow."

"You mustn't do that," pleaded the old milestone earnestly. "We were all young once. I want to ask you, as a favour, to tell my successor, when he comes, what I've told you. He may be discontented at first, and have youth's longing to wander. Point out to him that he needn't roam to see the world—if he stays bravely at his post he'll see it all right passing him on foot or on wheels. And impress on him the trouble he'll cause if he fidgets and strays. Ah, your folks are stirring—you'll be off in a minute."

"Well, old thing," said the car, "I shan't forget our talk. If all we cars did our work as well as you milestones, there would be a good deal less grumbling on the road. Good-bye."

*W. K. Holmes.*



# THE WAY OF THE WORLD

THREE little people from the big, big town  
Gazed up into the tall, tall tree;  
"Look here! Oh, look here!" cried they all. "How queer;  
What *can* those funny creatures be?"

Wide, wide awake were the two solemn owls;  
They had slept all day at their ease.  
Now they peered down below at the children in a row,  
And muttered: "What on earth are these?"

High, high from the sky the moon looked down.  
"It's very, very odd," said he,  
"That anyone should care to dwell down there  
Instead of in the sky like me."

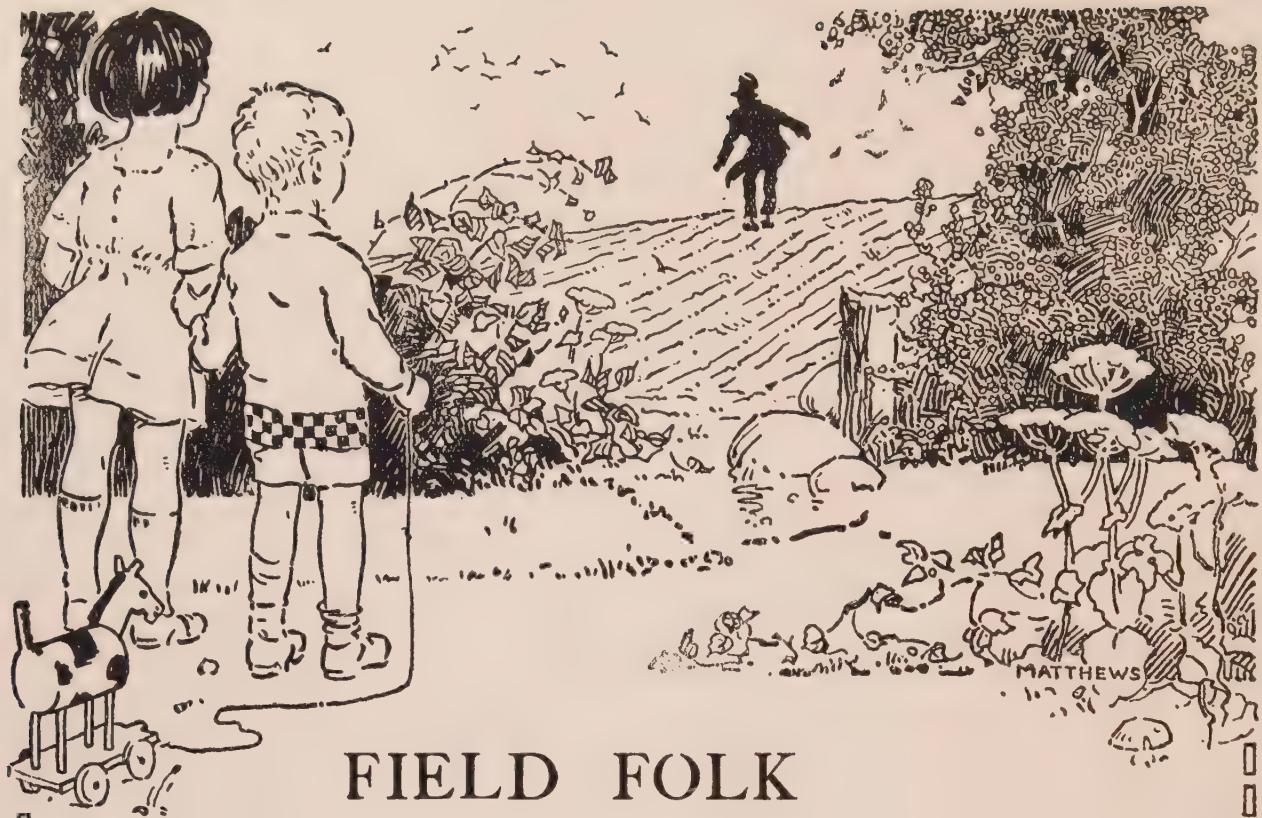
But owls still go prowling in the deep, deep night,  
When the children bundle home to their rest;  
And everyone, my dear, thinks the other one is queer.  
'T is a funny, funny world at the best.

*ffrida Wolfe.*





• "WHAT CAN THESE FUNNY CREATURES BE?"



## FIELD FOLK

Poor old man!

His boots are tattered, his back is bent—

His coat is rusty, and thin, and rent—

His hat is covered with many a dent—

Poor old man!

Poor old man!

He stands, so patient, from hour to hour;

Though tempests threaten and skies may lower,

He grumbles neither at sun nor shower—

Poor old man!

Poor old man!

No home but the open field he knows,

No friends, no fire—without saying it goes,

For he's *only a dummy to frighten the crows!*—

Poor old crows!

*Lilian Holmes.*

# FIELD FOLK.

*Words by LILIAN HOLMES.*

*Music by D. WAUCHOPE STEWART, Mus.Bac.*

*Allegretto.*

*p*

Poor old man ! His

*p*

boots are tattered, his back is bent ; His coat is rus-ty and

thin and rent ; His hat is covered with many a dent—

Poor old man !

*p*

*pp*



JOYCE  
TERNER

**T**HIS **M**ARQUIS IS BOTH RICH AND PROUD  
**H**IS FLOWERED COAT IS RATHER LOUD +  
**P**OPPIES RED AND POPPIES YELLOW +  
**H**E IS A MOST CONCEITED FELLOW



Surely a Dragon!

## THE MAGPIE'S OPINION

### I



OF course, now that Bunkin is a councillor amongst the Little People, one must be careful what one says about him. But stories do get about all the same.

One of the wise laws which Bunkin helped to make was this:

*The Little People, and the birds and the beasts, must not squabble amongst themselves. If they cannot agree about anything, they should talk of something else.*

A very good law, you see, but the difficult thing about making laws is to know where to stop, and he added that when the trouble was about something which really mattered, they must ask the first creature they met to settle it for them.

It sounds simple, doesn't it?

### II

Bunkin was the first to get into trouble with his new law. He was trying a new chime of harebells one day near the edge

## The Magpie's Opinion

of a spinney, when he heard a magpie and a squirrel talking in a very excited manner. The magpie was telling the squirrel that, if he didn't know a dragon when he saw one, she didn't think much of squirrels. The squirrel replied snappily that only a magpie with half her tail feathers gone would talk like that.

At this moment Bunkin marched into the spinney, looking very stern. He asked what all this noise was about, and the squirrel told him that a long brown crocodile had snapped off the magpie's tail feathers when she wasn't looking. Then it had tried to swallow the feathers and bark at the same time, and had to stand on its head to get the feathers out again.

"And Maggie thinks it was a dragon!" he jeered.

"Well, well," said Bunkin, "if you cannot agree yourselves I'll settle it for you. Where is this strange beast to be seen?"

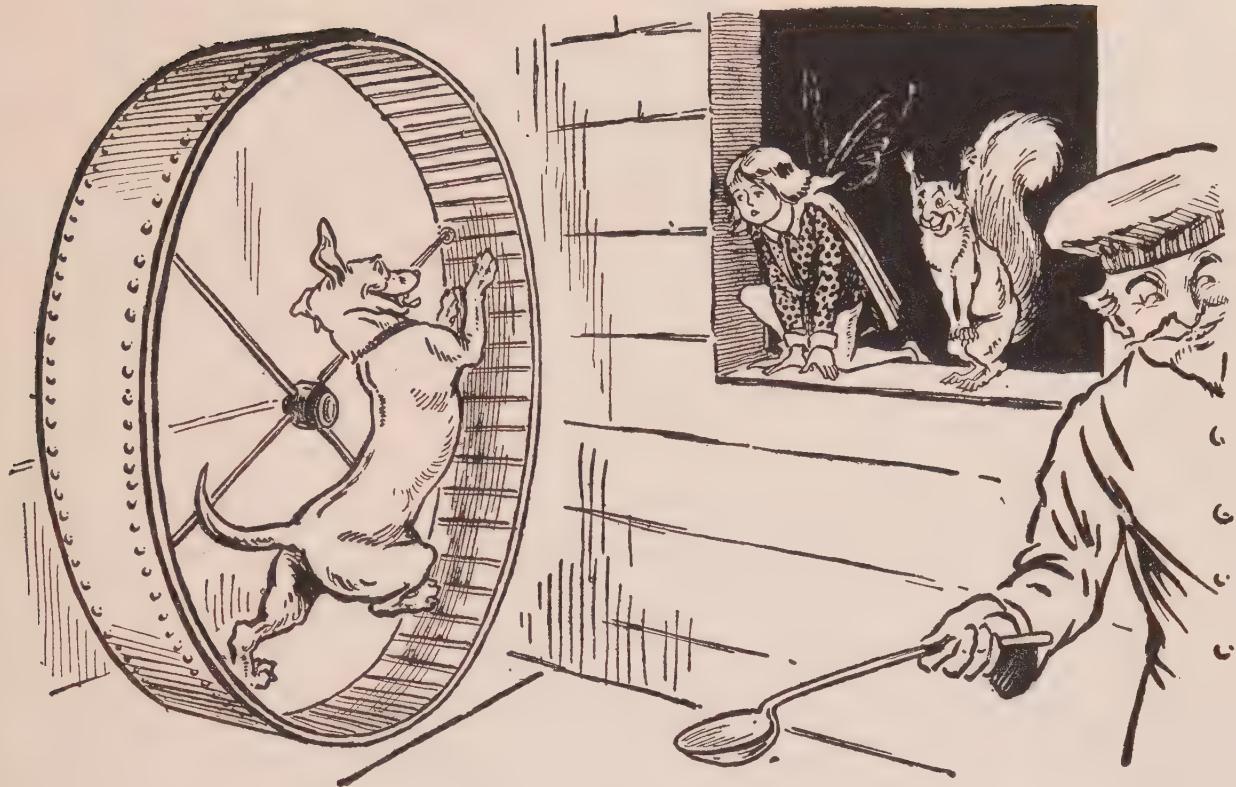
### III

They took Bunkin through the spinney, and across the park where the deer are, to the big castle which is covered all over with



A Magpie and a Squirrel talking in an excited manner

## The Magpie's Opinion



An amazing sight

ivy, and has a gold weathercock on the highest of its high towers.

The magpie could not fly for want of her tail feathers, so she hopped along beside them till they came to a large window standing open.

“He’s in there,” said the magpie.

Bunkin and the squirrel climbed up the ivy till they stood on the window sill, and, when they looked in, an amazing sight greeted their astonished gaze. Lots and lots of fat cooks in white caps and aprons were bustling about in a huge stone kitchen as big as a church, and the whole place was glowing red inside from a roaring fire-place every bit as big as a church door.

But the strangest thing of all was a mighty roasting-jack with a great wheel at one side. It stood before the fire, and inside it a whole steaming ox was turning round and round, and running

## The Magpie's Opinion

inside the wheel, and making it go round and round to turn the ox, was a big brown dachshund!

It was the first dachshund Bunkin had ever seen, and he looked, and looked, and looked.

"If that isn't a crocodile," said the squirrel, "I'd like to know what it is."

"A dragon," piped the magpie from below, and the squirrel chattered back and jumped all over the window sill.

"That," said Bunkin at last, because councillors are supposed to know everything, "is undoubtedly a seal. Look at his fins."

"Ho, ho!" laughed a hoarse voice behind him. "A seal! Fancy taking a kangaroo for a seal! He'll be trying to make us believe it's a bird of Paradise next."

And there, in the ivy just above Bunkin's head, sat a shiny jackdaw, looking at Bunkin out of its bright little eye. A jackdaw can be as annoying as a magpie, and this one had no manners to speak of, and councillors cannot stoop to argue with jackdaws. So Bunkin bowed politely and said:

"Since we cannot see eye to eye about this strange creature, sir, let us take another opinion. Here comes our dear but wily friend, the red fox. He will no doubt settle the question for us."

The fox, thus appealed to, put his paws on the window sill and looked in. Then he sat back, licking his whiskers, and said:

"My friends, what is it that has fins like a seal, and teeth like a crocodile, looks like a sausage, and barks like a dog?"

Then he laughed and scuttled away, leaving them very angry.

"We must ask the Downy Bird," declared Bunkin.

## IV

They found the Downy Bird in his usual place, inside the hollow tree. He woke up as they came tumbling in, and blinked at

## The Magpie's Opinion

them with his eyes like hot pennies. But he didn't say anything.

The magpie began to chatter at once, but the squirrel, on seeing the Downy Bird, changed his mind and went outside.

Then Bunkin humbly asked the Downy Bird to say what it was that had fins like a seal, and teeth like a crocodile, looked like a sausage, and barked like a dog.

The Downy Bird went on looking wise and saying nothing.

"That's his way," the Jackdaw explained in a friendly tone. "He looks as if he knew everything, and doesn't say anything. Isn't he a wise old bird?"

Then the Downy Bird spoke.

### V

The squirrel was waiting outside to hear the result.

"What did the Downy Bird say that this strange beast was?"



The Downy Bird went on looking wise

## The Magpie's Opinion

he asked anxiously, and Bunkin told him that the Downy Bird had said: "Better ask it."

"He said that, did he?" said the squirrel thoughtfully. "Well, it's not a bad idea; but who's going to do it? I'm shy."

"Oh," said the magpie airily, "I'm not afraid. I'll ask it."

The others were surprised at this, but they agreed readily enough, and the magpie hopped through the trees.

She was back again sooner than her friends expected, and she looked very pleased with herself.

"Is it a kangaroo?" asked the jackdaw eagerly.

"Or a seal?" suggested Bunkin.

But the magpie shook her head, and looked round at her torn tail feathers before answering.

"It is neither," she said; "it is a dragon. If you don't believe me, ask him for yourselves."

But they looked at the state of the magpie's tail, and agreed to let the question rest.

*J. D. Westwood.*

## LESSONS NOT NEEDED

WHEN people sail across to France,  
The words they say sound funny;  
They have to learn a special talk  
And count with foreign money!

But if our cocks and hens went there  
Each one might be a dunce,  
For since all fowls talk just the same,  
They understand at once!

*Hope Shepherd.*



OUT FOR A DRIVE

# THE BEAUTIFUL SANDY-WIND

D'YOU know the beautiful Sandy-wind?

It comes when the sky looks grey,  
And big White-horses are racing in  
From ever so far away;

And the Sea Anemones wave their arms,  
Then nervously shrink and close;  
And the little grains of the dry, dry, sand  
Feel eager, between your toes.

Then, all of a sudden, the wind goes "*WOOSH!*"  
And the sand comes up in a sheet,  
And it slaps your legs, and it fills your hair,  
Till you're gritty from head to feet.

And harder and harder it blows, until  
You are ready to dance and squeal,  
As it covers the parts that you leave undressed  
With a prickly, tickly, feel.

• • • • • • • • •

And what if Nurse grumbles and shakes her head,  
When it won't brush loose from your hair?  
You *love* the beautiful Sandy-wind,  
And you're only too glad it's there!

*Nina K. Brisley.*



THE BEAUTIFUL SANDY-WIND



# “A PACK OF NONSENSE”



HERE are only three members of the Explorers Society—Harold and Dick and I. My name is Muriel, and I am thirteen, nearly two years older than Harold. Dick is just ten.

I am secretary of the society, and have to write descriptions of all our adventures in a book. It is called a Minute Book. I don't know why. It takes me hours to describe some of the adventures.

We explore in all sorts of places, and discover all sorts of things: like buried treasure, and underground passages, and how many apples are in the loft (discovered by climbing on the roof), and what Sarah says to the baker when they stand for such ages down at the gate (rather a dangerous adventure, because the baker is a very sudden person), and lots of other things.

This description is about our nineteenth adventure. It wasn't a success. The boys wanted me to leave it out of the book, but I am not going to. If you are a secretary, you must do your duty.

It happened last holidays at Heaslake Manor. That is the lovely old house where Aunt Catherine and Uncle John live. They are Mother's uncle and aunt. We are a little afraid of Aunt Catherine, but Uncle John is a dear. I believe he would like to join our society, only he is a little afraid of Aunt Catherine himself. It was he who put this adventure into our heads by telling us a frightfully interesting ghost-story about the long picture-gallery. Aunt Catherine said it was all a pack of nonsense. So the title of this chapter in the Minute Book is really hers.

One of the old pictures in the gallery is the portrait of a girl ancestor (or ancestress)—a jolly pretty one—about sixteen, who wears a white frock and a big flappy hat tied down under her chin

## “A Pack of Nonsense”

with a pink ribbon. Her name was Annabel, and she is the ghost in the story.

Uncle said that, when Annabel was only seventeen, she ran away from home to marry the man she loved. The other ancestors did not love him, so she could not marry him properly in church, and have bridesmaids, and wedding-cake, and all that. One night, at full moon, she jumped out of the middle window in the picture-gallery into his arms. He was waiting on the terrace. (It isn't a very long jump; I could do it easily.) And they were married and went to Australia. I expect they lived happily ever after—she looks as if she would—but she never came home again, and the other ancestors never forgave her. That is why her ghost is supposed to walk in the gallery at midnight, or when the moon is full.

I don't believe in ghosts, and if I did I don't believe Annabel's ghost would want to do anything so silly. She looks far too sensible. The boys thought so too, but we all agreed that it would be a ripping adventure for the *Explorers* to go to the picture-gallery at the next full moon to see what happened. So we did.

Our bedrooms were in different parts of the house, so we could not go together, but we agreed to keep awake by pinching, and cold sponges, and standing with bare feet on the linoleum, and to meet in the picture-gallery a little before midnight.

It wasn't easy to keep from nodding off, but I managed it, and at ten minutes to twelve I opened my door very quietly and crept down the corridor.

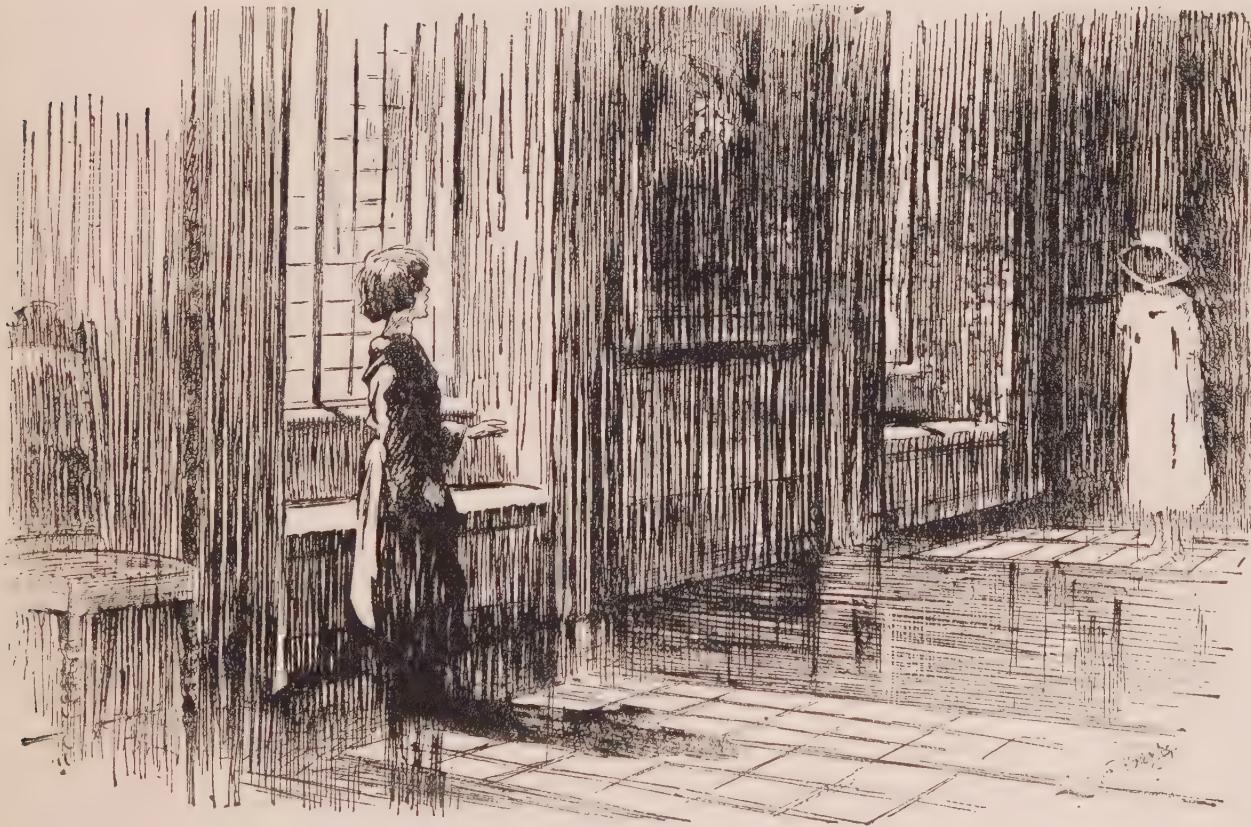
There was no one in the gallery when I got there. I hoped the boys would come soon, for though I wasn't frightened, of course, the big place looked rather lonely with the moonlight streaming in, and black shadows in the corners. I wrote my name on a sheet of paper that Harold had left, with a pencil, on the

## “A Pack of Nonsense”

window-seat of the middle window, so that each of us who kept the appointment might sign it to show we had really been there. Then I sat down and stared at my shadow stretching across the floor, and listened hard for the boys.

I heard an owl hoot, and I heard a mouse nibbling, but nothing else until the church clock began to strike twelve with a big booming sound that seemed to fill the gallery.

I thought the silly boys must have gone to sleep, but at the first stroke of the clock there were two sharp *creaks*, and the two doors of the gallery (one at either end) opened slowly. I was awfully glad, and began to say: “You lazy things! You’re only just in time.” But I didn’t finish it, for when I looked, first at one door and then at the other, I saw, not Harold and Dick in their dressing-gowns as I expected, but (you won’t believe it, but I



Exactly like the little Ancestress

## “A Pack of Nonsense”

*really* did) *two* girls in white frocks, with flappy hats tied down with pink ribbons! I could not see their faces because of the shadow of the hats, but they looked *exactly* like the little ancestress, Annabel, and they began to walk straight towards the window-seat where I was sitting, one from each end of the gallery.

I wasn't exactly frightened—though Harold says I was—but I was so tremendously surprised that I really did not know what I was doing. I just shouted “*Two! Two!*” and then began to laugh as if I should never leave off. I couldn't help it.

And when I screamed “*Two*”, the two Annabells saw one another, and then *they* screamed, and turned round and rushed back to the doors which they had come in by.

I left off laughing then, and began to cry—I don't know why—with my head down on the window-seat. And there Uncle John found me and took me back to bed, and tucked me in ever so kindly.

He had heard a noise, and come out into the corridor, where he met one of the flying ghosts. And it was Dick (as perhaps you have guessed) with my white frock on. And the other ghost was Harold wearing a dress of one of the maids.

Each of the silly boys had meant to frighten the other two explorers by acting the ghost, and each of them was badly scared when he thought he saw another ghost.

That is all about this adventure—except that Uncle John was a brick. I fancy he was not quite so kind to the boys, when he went to their rooms, as he was to me, because they both seemed very *blue* next day, but he didn't tell Aunt Catherine.

I begged him not to. I knew she would scold us as if we were silly little nursery kids, and call our exploration “a pack of nonsense”.

A. T. M



MARJORIE  
SLADE.

HIDE AND SEEK



## PINS

WHAT becomes of all the pins? Does anybody know  
Where the rows of pins have gone, and why they always go?  
With all the pins that people buy, with all that have been bought,  
The world should be stuck full of pins—or so you would have  
thought—

For everybody loses pins and finds so very few.  
What makes them slip away so quick? Where *can* they all go to?

Why—can't you guess!—to Fairyland, for fairy homes are made  
Of all the pins in shining rows that *you* call “Lost or Strayed”.  
At night the fairies pick them up; each *must* bring back a pin  
Or two, by dawn, to Fairyland before they'll let her in.  
It takes a lot to build a house, to pave the street, a lot,  
And hundreds for the railing round a park or garden plot.  
Oh, Fairyland's enormous now, and they're always adding on;  
So next time Nursie drops a pin, *you'll* know where it has gone.

*Frida Wolfe.*



# The Lonely Ogre

By Mrs Carey  
Morris

Illustrated by  
E. G. B. 6

# O

NCE upon a time, in a tower on the top of a hill in the middle of a great forest, there lived an Ogre.

He lived all alone, and did his own cooking and even his own washing, for the country people were so terrified of him that not one of them would come and be his servant.

Of course he could have caught some of them and taken them to his tower to be his slaves, but he was a kindly Ogre, and did not understand at all why the people were so afraid of him, or why indeed they called him the Ogre.

It was because he was twice as tall, and broad, and strong as any ordinary man; his great red beard reached to his waist, and shone like fire; his eyes were like flashing swords.

The forest over which he lived was thick with undergrowth, and in parts of it were dangerous swamps.

## The Lonely Ogre

The Ogre's ambition was to clear the forest and make it safe for the children to play in, and afterwards to turn it into fertile land that would grow corn and flowers as well as trees.

So every morning he went down from his tower and worked hard at cutting down the dead trees, and filling up the bogs. When they heard the sound of his axe, the mothers would call the children and tell them not to go near the forest, or the dreadful Ogre would eat them up.

So everyone shunned the forest, and it was a very lonely Ogre that stamped up every evening to his tower, often dragging the trunk of a tree for firewood. Sometimes he would light a bonfire to keep him company, and the glare of it could be seen for miles around. The country folk would then shut their doors, and the children would drop their playthings and go willingly to bed, and talk in whispers, wondering what the Ogre was cooking for dinner.

One morning the Ogre looked out from his tower, and saw in the distance a long cavalcade of horses and men, with glittering lances, and with gay flags and banners, and on the breeze came the sound of music.

"I believe it's a *band*," said the Ogre, smiling all over his face. Then the Ogre suddenly realized what a very lonely Ogre he was.

"It's years since I had a holiday," he said to himself, "and I never seem to see any people nowadays. I think I'll go and look at that procession." So he gave his face an extra wash, and brushed his beard till it shone like gold, and he put on a clean collar and started out.

When he came to the high road, he found it crowded with people, who all fell back as he approached, gazing at him with wide eyes, so he soon found himself right in the front row of the crowd.

Down the road, behind a band of trumpeters, there came a golden coach, and in it the loveliest creature he had ever seen.

## The Lonely Ogre



The Ogre had never in his life seen anything so wonderful

It was the Princess Lilia going in state to meet the Prince of a neighbouring country, who was coming to woo her for his bride.

To the Ogre she was so small that she looked like a fairy. Her delicate face was so white that it seemed chiselled out of alabaster, and so pink it was as if a flame shone through it. Her large eyes were black and shining as coals, and her hair as black and glossy as the raven's wing. She was dressed in a filmy gown of golden tissue, and bowed smiling at each side to the shouting, cheering people.

If the Ogre had never in his life seen anything so wonderful as the Princess, neither had the Princess seen anything so wonderful as the Ogre.

When she caught sight of him, she forgot all about being a Princess, and sprang up and stood staring at him as the country folk

## The Lonely Ogre

did. As the coach passed him, the Ogre stretched out his great hand, and, lifting the Princess out of the coach as easily as if she had been a doll, tucked her under his arm, and strode into the forest.

Though at first the Princess was startled, she said to herself, "After all, this is an adventure".

The people were stunned at first by the sudden disappearance of their beloved Princess, but, when they realized what had happened, they dashed into the forest to rescue her. But they soon got scattered and lost their way. The band and the soldiers gallantly dashed in also, but they rode in a body into one of the bogs, and looked a sorry sight floundering all muddy to the bank.

Although Princess Lilia was small she was very brave, and besides princesses do not have adventures as a rule, so she was quite enjoying this one.



"I am rather lonely too," said the Princess

## The Lonely Ogre

“Where are you taking me?” she said.

“To my tower,” replied the Ogre.

“To eat me?”

“Certainly not! Although you look quite nice enough to eat.”

The Princess laughed at that, and the Ogre smiled, for she had a pretty laugh like the tinkling of a brook.

It was a long time since the Ogre had met anyone who was not afraid of him, so this was as great an adventure to him as it was to the Princess.

He sat down on a log half-way up the hill, and put the Princess on his knee.

“I am very lonely in my tower,” he said; “no one ever comes and talks to me.”

“I am rather lonely too,” said the Princess; “no one ever talks to me either.”

“What!” said the Ogre. “Lonely with all those shouting crowds and all those bands!”

“That’s only noise,” said the Princess. “But no one ever talks to me in a friendly way. People say, ‘Yes, your Royal Highness’; ‘No, your Royal Highness’.”

“It seems to me we just suit each other,” he said.

The Princess nodded; she liked this big friendly Ogre.

He hoisted her on to his shoulder and continued on his way, and the Princess held on to a lock of his hair, thinking to herself: “This is much more fun than driving in a golden coach”.

When they reached the tower, the Ogre set about getting dinner, and the Princess ran hither and thither, looking at everything and asking questions. She tried to help to lay the table, but, not being used to it, she was not much use; and the Ogre was so enchanted in looking at her that he put the knives, forks, and spoons all wrong.

At last dinner was ready. Except a small helping for the

## The Lonely Ogre

Princess, the Ogre ate a whole chicken and a bushel of potatoes himself. For dessert there was a huge dish of wild strawberries, and the Princess, who had never tasted wild strawberries before, thought she would like to live in the tower for ever.

After dinner they washed up, and then the Ogre smoked his pipe, with the Princess sitting on his knee. The Ogre told her all about his great ambition to clear the forest, and pictured what it would look like when only the strong and beautiful trees were left, and all the marshy places were beautiful with corn and flowers; and how he could not understand why everybody avoided him.

“I know,” said the Princess. “It is because you are a king.”

“A king, indeed! Ho! ho!” laughed the Ogre.

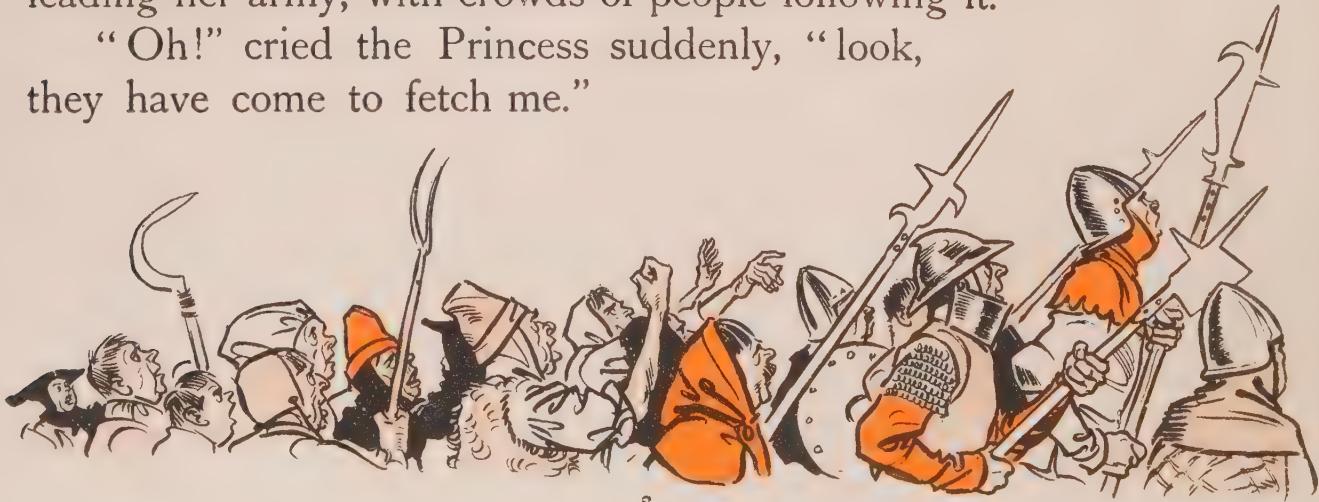
“Yes,” said the Princess, “that is how they treat me; and I am a Princess, so I ought to know. They are afraid of me too, and no one has ever talked to me before, so it must be because you are a king. King of the tower and the forest.”

“Well, I have certainly never looked upon myself as a king,” laughed the Ogre.

Now they were so interested in their talk that they did not hear the people climbing the path to the tower.

The Prince, who was to have married the Princess, had arrived leading her army, with crowds of people following it.

“Oh!” cried the Princess suddenly, “look, they have come to fetch me.”



## The Lonely Ogre

The Ogre looked up and saw hundreds of people and soldiers marching round the tower.

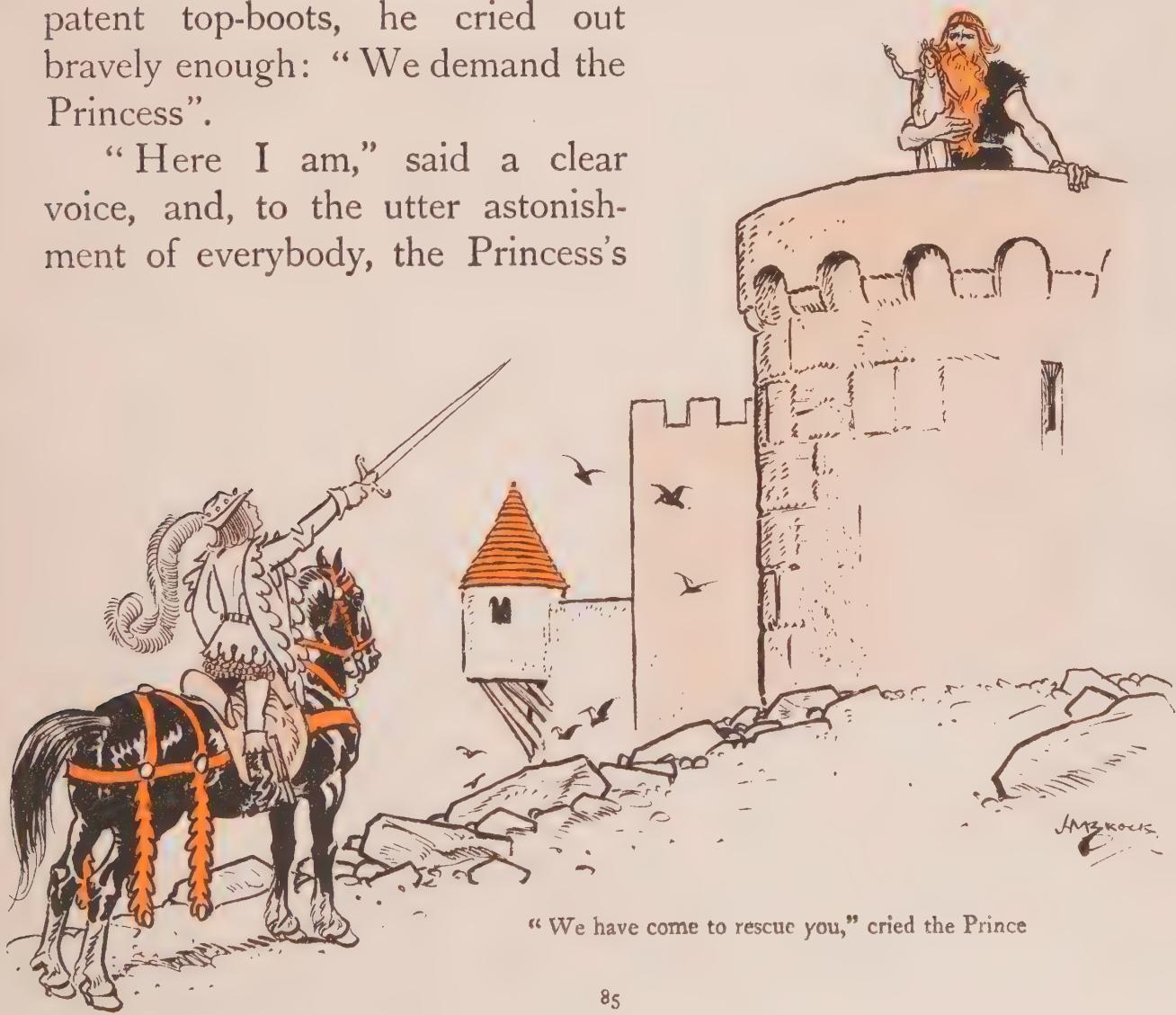
He strode to the wall and looked over, and his heart sank, for the Prince rode a black charger, and wore a suit of white satin trimmed with pearls, a feather plumed hat, and patent top-boots.

"What a smart, handsome little fellow," thought the Ogre, "and a prince too! The Princess won't want to stay with me now."

As for the Prince, his heart sank when he looked at the Ogre.

"What a terrible fellow," he thought, "one crack from his fist and I should be done for." But, though he was shaking in his patent top-boots, he cried out bravely enough: "We demand the Princess".

"Here I am," said a clear voice, and, to the utter astonishment of everybody, the Princess's



"We have come to rescue you," cried the Prince

## The Lonely Ogre

face looked out from the Ogre's beard, like the moon appearing from behind a golden cloud.

"We have come to rescue you," cried the Prince.

The Princess looked at the Prince, at his satin and pearl suit, his plumed hat, and his patent boots, and decided that she did not like him.

"Thank you," she said, "but I am going to marry the King."

"What king?" cried the Prince.

"This king! The King of the Forest and the Tower."

"Now at last I do feel like a king," said the Ogre, and he kissed the Princess before them all.

"Well, well, we never knew he was a king; we thought he was an Ogre," the people said to one another.



The people pulled the golden coach down to the palace

## The Lonely Ogre

“The Princess says he is a king, and that she is going to marry him, so he must be one,” so they threw their caps into the air, and began to cheer, until the forest rang with their shouts of “Long live the King”.

The Prince went back to his own country, but the people dragged the golden coach up the hill, and made the Ogre and the Princess get into it while they pulled it down again to the palace.

So the Ogre and the Princess were married, and there was great ringing of bells and burning of bonfires.

The Ogre looked such a magnificent King that the people were very proud of him, and the other kings were so afraid that no one made war upon the country.

When he explained to the people why he worked so hard in the forest, they were all quite eager to help, and in a few years the land was made fertile and beautiful, and safe for the children.

But they left untouched the part of the forest round the hill, and the King and Queen went there every year for their summer holiday.

They went by themselves, and did all their own cooking, and had chicken and wild strawberries for dinner.

And, when the little princes and princesses came, they took them there too.

At the bottom of the hill, the Ogre sent the golden coach back, and he lifted the Queen on one shoulder, and the young prince on the other; the littlest prince rode on his back; and the two little princesses he carried in his beard.

So, laughing and singing, the Ogre carried them all up the hill together, and they had the most glorious time anyone could possibly imagine.

*Jessie Phillips Morris.*



E DOROTHY REES

THE SEE-SAW

# How RAGS CAUGHT THE THIEF



**R**AGS, the puppy, was asleep on his mistress's bed. He very often slept with one eye open, and it was very fortunate that at this particular time he did so, as something very strange happened.

Was Rags dreaming, or did he really see Joe, the jackdaw, come softly up and steal his mistress's lovely pearl necklace from off the dressing-table?

He could believe his eyes, for both eyes were very wide open now. It was all done so quietly, and then Joe was off. Rags started up and shook himself. There was nothing for it but to give chase.

Down the stairs he flew, and saw Joe just disappearing into the kitchen. Rags hardly knew what he was doing, he was so excited. Through the kitchen he chased Joe, waking up old Tibby and her kittens, and out into the yard, where, oh, surely, the geese would come to the rescue. There they stood, all in a row, with their long necks well stretched out, and there was no room for Joe to pass. Now,



## How Rags caught the Thief



those geese angry, and what a cackling they made!

But Rags soon realized he wanted wings very badly to keep up with Joe; for when they came to the stream Joe calmly flew over it, while poor Rags had to swim.

At last they reached the stable. Joe tried to fly into the loft, and Rags, seeing his last chance was going, made a leap into the air, and caught Joe by a feather of his tail. The feather came out, but Joe was so upset and so angry at losing one of his beautiful feathers that he dropped the necklace. Rags seized it, and I don't think there was a

surely Rags would catch his prize, but no, Joe coolly flew over the row of geese, and left poor Rags wondering what to do, as unfortunately he had no wings. He didn't stay to think long. He must be brave; so with a loud bark he dashed right into the middle of them, scattering them right and left, and weren't



## How Rags caught the Thief

happier little dog, than when he laid the necklace at his mistress's feet, and heard her say: "Well done, little Rags, my own clever doggie!" And Rags would tell you, if he could, that now he always sleeps with one eye open, as you never know what may happen.

*E. M. Hunter.*



## IF!

IF I could be a Skipper and you could be a Mate,  
You'd go to bed at seven, but I should stop up late.  
I'd rise at—say, eleven—but you'd be called at eight,  
By order of the Skipper—if you were just the Mate.

If I could be a Steward and you were Engineer,  
I'd bring you lemon cheesecakes, and buns and ginger-beer.  
And I might run the engines, if you were feeling queer—

But then—I'm not a Steward, and you're no Engineer.

*Maurice Clifford.*

# TOADSTOOLS

**T**IMOTHY wanders away and away,  
Up the hillside lit by the moonlight grey,  
For the Queen of the Toadstools has promised to show  
How the white little, tight little, toadstools grow.

The Queen of the Toadstools, in long red cloak,  
Meets Tim at the trunk of a hollow oak,  
Where the imps and the fairies are fluttering round,  
Each making a neat little hole in the ground.

They pour in a drop of some magical stuff,  
And blow down the hole with a puff and a puff,  
Then up pop the toadstools, some large and some small,  
Some spreading like brollies, some round as a ball.

They smooth them and shape them and finish them true,  
And rub them all over with moonshine and dew,  
And then, when the business is properly done,  
They start leaping over the toadstools for fun.

Timothy laughs and says: "This is a treat,  
But I must take care where I'm putting my feet.  
It *would* be a terrible pity to tread  
On a toadstool just made, or a wee goblin's head!"

Fairies and goblins are friendly with Tim.  
They flutter and cuddle up close to him;  
And before they vanish they say, "Good-night,  
Come again, Tim, when the moon shines bright!"

*Jessie Pope.*



TOADSTOOLS



# SOME OLD-TIME PLAYTHINGS



If you sometimes tire of your ingenious and expensive toys, put on your hats and come out into the fields and woods. We can amuse ourselves for a change with some of the simple playthings which our great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers used to make for themselves, when they were boys and girls. They did not have many ready-made toys, those long-ago children. A box of bricks, a skipping-rope, a set of ninepins, a stiff-jointed wooden doll, and a bat and ball. Most children thought themselves very lucky to possess even so many.

I need not tell the boys to take their pocket-knives and some string with them. All boys, whether of to-day or a hundred years ago, carry such necessaries. Perhaps a good cork or two, and a match-box of long strong pins will also come in usefully. And if one of the girls has a strong, sharp hat-pin, let her fasten on her hat with that. She might also put into her pocket one of the plaits of many-coloured threads which used to be in the long-ago work-baskets, and are now again coming into fashion.

We will suppose it is autumn, when the nuts and acorns are ripe and falling. Then we can begin with a little water-wheel which is quite easy to make.

*A Water-wheel.*—A water-wheel is very good fun, especially because it needs water to work it, and playing with water is as delightful to boys and girls now as it was long ago. A tiny running stream is best for the water-wheel, but it can be worked under the tap in the bathroom.

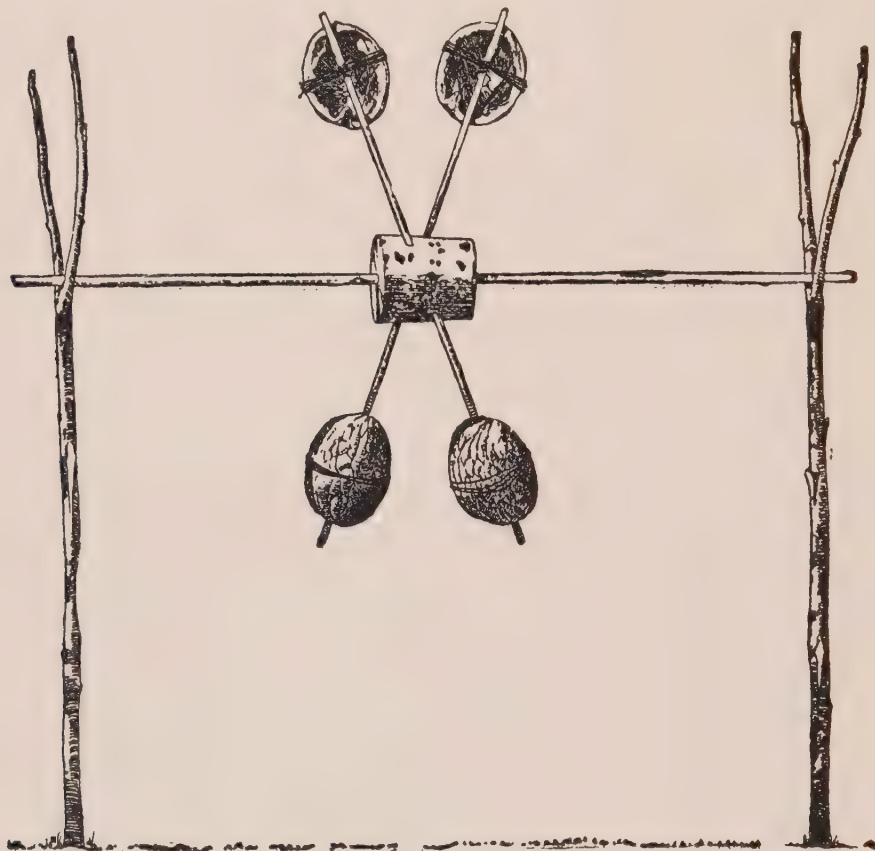
It can be made of slender branches and acorns, with pins to fasten them, or of walnut-shells fixed by strong thread or fine string. The nut-shells make the strongest toy, so we will use them.

We shall want four good half-shells, three slender straight branches (two of the same length and one rather longer), and two small forked branches, also a large sound cork.

## Some Old-time Playthings

Peel off the bark from your longest straight branch, and make it as smooth and round as you can. This will serve as the axle of our wheel.

Now take the cork and bore a hole right through it in the middle, lengthwise, with the hatpin, turning the pin round and round until the hole is large enough for the prepared axle to be pushed through it. (A very fine gimlet, such



The Water-wheel

as is found in the tiny pocket tool-cases of to-day, will do this boring more quickly.) Push the axle through the cork, as in the sketch. Next take your shorter branches, and firmly fasten a walnut-shell to one end of each with strong thread, first cutting a tiny groove in the edge of the shell in the middle at either side, so that the thread may not slip out of place. It is well to twist a strand or two of the thread round the branch as well as round the shell.

These will be two of the *sweeps* of the wheel.

Bore two more holes through the cork, in the middle, from one side to the other, in such a way that, when the two branches carrying the *sweeps* are pushed

## Some Old-time Playthings

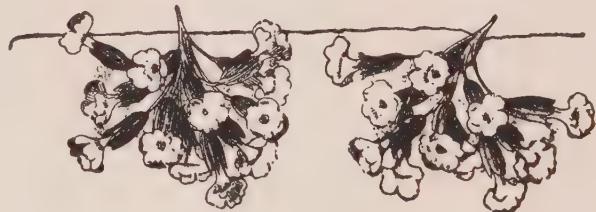
through them, they form a cross (see sketch). When you have pushed these branches through their holes into place, bind a walnut shell on to the other end of each. The two shells at one end of the cross should have their rounded backs facing you, those at the other end show their hollow cups (see sketch).

Now our wheel is finished. To fix it up we plant the forked supports on the banks of a little stream, or if the stream is too wide for this we must try to fix them in the bed of the stream. The axle of the wheel must be at the right height to allow each *sweep* in turn to dip into the water to a sufficient depth.

If fixed well this wheel should be worked splendidly by the current.

In spring, after a cowslip-picking excursion, the girls of long ago liked to sit down upon a green bank in the sunshine, with the larks singing and the cuckoos calling, and make cowslip balls.

*Cowslip Ball*.—This was done by setting a long row of cowslip heads (with the stalks nipped off) astride a string, like the panniers across a donkey's back, and then tying the ends of the string together in a knot, with all the heads of the flowers outwards, and a small bale of crumpled paper in the middle.



How the cowslips should be strung

In summer, the little great-grandmothers-to-be made garlands and necklaces of flowers; and most amusing little dolls from poppies or from heads of maize; and flutes and Pan's pipes from reeds.

But, as we suppose ourselves to be taking an autumn walk, we will go through the rickyard at the farm and make their favourite game of straw spilikins,

*Straw Spilikins*.—We shall want a few handfuls of good firm straws. Firstly we pull off the leaves and any roughness from these straws. Next, we cut from them fifty or sixty pieces of equal length (about 5 inches) with no knots or inequalities in them. After that we cut three rather longer pieces of straw: one, called the *knav*,  $5\frac{1}{4}$  inches; the second, called the *queen*,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches; and the

## Some Old-time Playthings

third, called the *king*,  $5\frac{3}{4}$  inches. So that they may be easily seen among the other pieces of straw, we will tie a piece of coloured thread round each of these longer straws, a little distance from one end. We will chose a purple thread for the king, a gold one for the queen, and a blue one for the knave.

Now all we need is two hooks set in handles. These are made in this way. Let us choose two firm pieces of straw about 7 inches long. Then we will bend two pins into the shape of hooks, and push the heads of these hooks a little way into the tubes of the chosen straws—one into each—and bind the straws firmly round with threads of different colour, so that the pins cannot slip out.

Now we are ready to play the game when we reach home. There can be two or more players. One person, chosen by lot, takes all the pieces of straw, or spilikins, except the hooks, in one hand, and holds them up above a table with a smooth top, then opens his hand quickly and lets them fall and scatter on the table.

The next player now takes a hook and tries with it very carefully to remove one spilikin from the rest, without moving or even shaking any of the others.



The Spilikin Hook

When he has successfully removed one, he tries to draw another from the collection on the table, but as soon as any other spilikin than the one he is touching is seen to stir, however slightly, his turn is at once over, and the next player tries his luck in the same way.

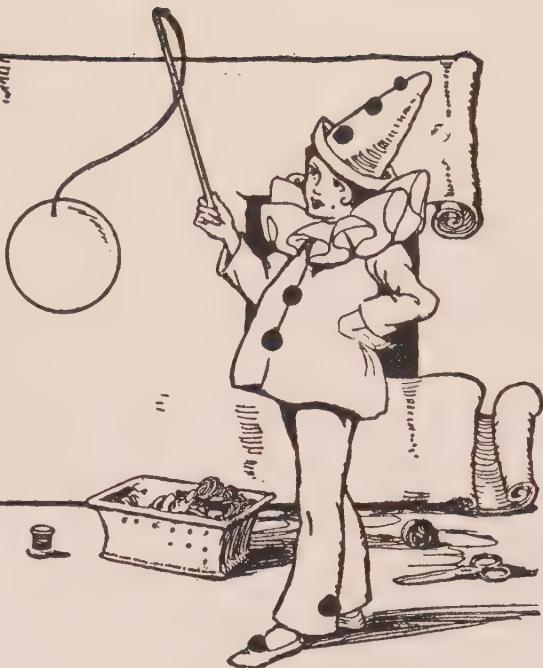
This continues until all the spilikins on the table have been captured. An ordinary plain spilikin scores one, the knave ten, the queen twenty, and the king thirty.

The winner is, of course, the player who makes the highest score.

These were favourite games in long-ago days. I believe boys and girls would enjoy them to-day as much, especially if they used their clever wits and their clever fingers to make them.

A. T. M.

# THE FAIRY QUEEN'S MESSAGE



Helen Jacobs



"Oh, Mother!" cried Mercy one morning, "what a lovely surprise! It's a letter from Miss Garner, and she asks me to a fancy-dress party. What fun!"

But while Mercy is reading her letter again I must tell you about her. She lived with her mother, who, since Daddy's death, had taken charge of Grantchester Court. Mrs. Manning and Mercy were very comfortable, though they lived in only two rooms and the kitchen, and had really no money for luxuries. Mercy's friends thought her a lucky girl; for, they said, fancy that *lovely* old garden to play in! It must be enchanted, and anyone might imagine it to be just full of fairies!

So now you know why Mercy was so pleased to get Miss Garner's letter, and can understand how very disappointed she was when Mrs. Manning said:

"I am so sorry, my darling, but you can't go. I cannot afford to buy you a dress."

"Oh, Mother!" cried Mercy, "not even a cheap one, a *very* cheap one?" She cried bitterly, she was so very disappointed; but she knew it was of no use—fancy dresses were *luxuries*.

## The Fairy Queen's Message

Mercy wandered round the garden and wished she could meet a fairy. "Fairies! fairies! let me see you," she called. A breeze was blowing and her cry floated all over the garden.



"From the Fairy Queen," he said

Then there was dead silence. Mercy waited, breathless, hoping for an answer. Suddenly a tiny voice broke the stillness. "Miss Mercy Manning, I believe?"

Mercy looked round and saw the strangest little figure. He

## The Fairy Queen's Message

had a shock of black hair, and wore an apple-green tunic. In one hand he held a letter.

The little elf looked so timid that Mercy plucked up enough courage to take the letter. "From the Fairy Queen," he said, with a nervous bow.

Mercy looked at the letter; it was addressed to herself.

"So the fairies know my name," she cried.

But no answer came; the strange little messenger had gone. She sat down then and opened her second letter that day. It was very short—just three words—and at first it disappointed her.

### "THINK. WORK. CONTRIVE."

Mercy puzzled over it all day. She turned it over and over, and searched the envelope, but not another word could she find. She was very quiet all supper-time, and Mrs. Manning thought she was brooding over her disappointment. "Don't mind, darling," she said. "We are going to the pantomime with Uncle Jack on Boxing-day, remember."

"Good-night, Mamma dear!" said Mercy. "I'm not miserable about the party. I've been thinking!" and she astonished her mother by running into the garden instead of upstairs to bed.

She ran to the spot where she had talked to the little elf that morning, then she stopped and shouted joyfully: "I WILL,

WILL, and *thank* you, Fairy Queen!" and the breeze carried her words all over the garden.

All that week Mercy shut herself in her bedroom instead of playing with her friends, but her face was so happy that her mother thought she couldn't be moping, and, knowing she had a little mystery, did not question her daughter.

On the afternoon of the party Mrs. Manning said: "Here

## The Fairy Queen's Message

is a shilling, Mercy; run and buy some cakes and ask your friend Sylvia to have tea with you."

"Thanks, Mamma," said Mercy; "but first I have a surprise for you," and she ran upstairs.

Presently Mercy came tripping down again; but what a change! Mrs. Manning looked with astonishment at the daintiest little pierrot in the world.

"Why, Mercy!" she gasped, "where did you get the clothes?" and then Mercy told her mother how she had THOUGHT, WORKED, and CONTRIVED. "I spent the half-crown Uncle Jack gave me," she cried excitedly. "I bought a dye and dipped my old pyjamas pale green, and my old white canvas shoes—that cost sixpence. Then I bought some black wool and made the pom poms—that cost a shilling. I made the pointed cap out of thin cardboard—that cost sixpence, and I washed and starched the best parts of an old net curtain and made the ruff for my neck."

"You dear *clever* little girl," cried her delighted mother, kissing her, "however did you think of it all?"

Then Mercy told of her adventure and the Queen's letter.

"Last Friday afternoon, did you say?" asked her mother. "Why, you were sound asleep all the time. I saw you from my window. You must have dreamt your little green elf."

Perhaps so; but Mercy went to the party, and her dress was very much admired, and she had a gloriously happy evening.

When she looked for the Fairy Queen's letter she could not find it, and no more fairies appeared in the garden; but Mercy never forgot the message, and all her life it helped her out of her difficulties.

*Ellen Flory.*



A SPOILT FAMILY



## ALL VERY WELL!

**T**is all very well to be a pet fox-terrier, and to have a darling little mistress like Joanna. It is all very well to do the marketing with her, and to be called the cleverest dog in the village. Quite right too; so I am!

It is all very well to visit the Butcher and the Baker, and to watch the basket fill up. There are some nice tit-bits in a Butcher's shop. I saw a dream of a bone there to-day. It was under the counter; but of course it was nothing to me, for I had the basket to carry.

That is my job, and I quite like it as a rule. People stop to gaze at me as I pass, and to say, "Clever dog! Isn't he cute?" and things like that, which I enjoy. But—I could enjoy the bone also.

Joanna thinks the nicest tit-bits are to be found at the Baker's. She calls them caramels. Well, tastes differ, but give me a bone! Yet I could enjoy a caramel too, if my mouth were not full of basket.

## All Very Well!

The Baker gave Joanna a big packet of caramels to-day. Each one is wrapped up in silver paper. I prefer them plain; but, as I have said, tastes differ. And, in any case, they are not for me.

I am walking behind with the basket, Joanna is walking in front with the caramels. I hear her munching them. Every now and again she drops one by mistake. But what is that to a dog whose mouth is full of basket?

If Joanna eats any more of those things she will be sick—I know she will. I am very hot. I think this basket must be full of stones, it is so heavy. Yonder is another caramel fallen in the dust! What a waste!

I think I must really have a rest. Yes, I will. I shall just set the basket down here by the road. Crunch! crunch! crunch! Oh dear, that caramel was good, though it was so small! But I wish I had the bone too.

Perhaps I might go back for it. What a good idea! Joanna will never know. I can slip in under the Butcher's counter, and snatch it up.

Whizz!—How a fox-terrier can run! There and back again, and Joanna is still eating caramels. I shall just pop the bone into the basket, and bury it later on.

Hurrah! Just did it and no more! I was afraid that Joanna would look round and wonder what had become of me, but she is just as interested in caramels as I am in bones.

Now we are off once more. I am walking behind with the basket, Joanna is walking in front with the caramels. But I have got my bone; so it really is ALL VERY WELL!

*Marie Bayne.*



MARJORIE  
SLADE

THE SKIPPING MATCH

# THE SKIPPING MATCH

KATE is very nearly ten,  
Straight and slim and strong and tall.  
Little fair-haired sister Gwen  
Is but six years old, and small.  
On a smooth and grassy patch—  
See—they have a skipping match.

But, though Gwen is very wee,  
She's a fairy, light as air;  
And it's plain enough to me  
Katie must indeed take care,  
And must skip her best, to beat  
Gwenny's scarlet-slippered feet.

Kate decides to take the start,  
Brisk and gay and full of hope,  
Counting loudly, light of heart—  
Fast and faster flies the rope!  
Sixty—seventy—then poor Katie  
Trips and slips and stops at eighty.

Now wee Gwenny takes her turn,  
Also skipping very fast,  
Looking rather grave and stern,  
Sixty—seventy—eighty—past—  
Then she blunders—oh what fun,  
Gwenny wins at eighty-one!

*Jessie Pope.*



Rosa C. PETHERICK.

THREE IN A HAMMOCK

# FLO AND THE GIPSIES



BOUT eight o'clock, just after dinner and shortly before Flo's bedtime, Dad said he would walk a little way up the road and on to the Front to get a blow.

They had arrived only that afternoon from town for a fortnight by the sea, she and Dad.

Flo came to the door in the wall of the garden to see Dad off. She asked if she might walk a little bit of the way with him, and Dad said, after a moment's thought: "Yes, it's still quite light. I think you may."

At the corner he bade her good-bye, and to be a good girl.

Flo fully intended to be; but when Dad was gone, and she began to walk back, she thought, as it was still light, there was no reason why she should not go the teeniest weeniest bit in the other direction.

Flo took two turnings without thinking, for she was rather a feather-head. And, after that, she decided to go back to the cottage, and home to bed.

But, easier said than done. Flo could not find the cottage.

She tried three different turnings, getting farther from home, had she but known.

Then she noticed ahead of her the beginning of a funny little narrow lane; but the lane only ended in a piece of common land with little tufty clumps of furze scattered about it. And not a house or a light in any direction!

"Oh, dear, what shall I do?" cried Flo; and she dropped on the grass and began to cry.

For Flo was only eleven, and she was lost.

She had just made up her mind that, now she had cried

## Flo and the Gipsies

as much as she could, she had better go back along the lane, when she thought she heard a voice.

She listened with all her might. Yes, there was someone not very far away. Very softly she began to creep over the grass towards the sound, which seemed to come from a little hollow she had not noticed; and against the sky she saw a white horse grazing, and beyond the horse what looked like a little house on wheels—a caravan.

“Gipsies,” said Flo very softly to herself. She had always been a little afraid of gipsies, with their wild dark faces, their bright and often tattered clothes, and their big gold earrings and gaudy coloured beads.

Still, they were company. So she lay on the ground and wriggled herself a little nearer the edge above the hollow.



She fell down into the middle of them

## Flo and the Gipsies

They had lighted a fire to cook their supper, and Flo could see their faces. There were three of them, two women and a man. The women attended to the cooking, while the man smoked his pipe; he had a very dark skin, and wore earrings in his ears too. When he laughed Flo could see his shining white teeth. But she thought he looked kind.

One of the women had a tiny baby on her lap, and Flo thought she would like to see its face; so she kept stretching and stretching until, all in a moment, she overbalanced and fell down into the middle of them.

The women screamed and jumped to their feet; the man shouted. As for poor Flo, she sat where she had fallen, looking up at them all, with her face all scratched and torn. Her ankle was twisted, too, but that did not seem to matter; nothing mattered now that she was in such a pickle.

"I beg your pardon," she said politely; "I didn't mean to hurt anyone. I wanted to see what—what the baby was like, and—"

But here she broke into sobs.

"I thought I saw something move up there," the man said.

"I've lost my way," said Flo.

"Lucky you didn't fall into the fire and upset the supper," said the older woman. "If you have lost your way, missy, that ain't no cause to cry for. Have a bit of supper with us and you'll find you'll feel spry again."

"Better tell us how you came here," said the man, "and p'raps we'll be able to help a bit. Not to-night, o' course."

Flo told them how it happened. The older woman said, as she began to serve out the supper: "You see what comes o' doin' what you got no right to do," in a sour tone.

## Flo and the Gipsies



Victoria gave Flo the baby to hold

The younger one, whose name was Victoria, was kinder, and gave Flo the baby to hold.

It was wrapped up in a bright shawl. Flo was so pleased that she forgot her tears and peeped inside the shawl. The baby was wide awake, and looked at her!

After supper the man and the older woman went away and had a long talk together. When they came back the man said: "We'll keep you for the night, missy, if you like. In the morning I'll take you into the town on old Joe there. They'll have been told about you at the police station by now, I reckon."

"But there's Dad!" cried Flo. "What about Dad?"

The sour-faced woman said: "You ought to ha' thought of your dad afore, missy. I ain't letting my Tom go into the town to-night for no one."

## Flo and the Gipsies

It was a very quiet Flo who followed Victoria obediently to the foot of the steps of the caravan. "We be sleeping out this fine weather," said Victoria; "but p'raps, missy, you ain't used to it." She showed Flo the little shelf that ran along one side of the caravan, and told her she might lie there.

When she was gone, Flo could not help looking round her eagerly, for she had never been in a caravan before. This was Victoria's caravan, and it was very spick and span. There were tiny windows down each side, and in the upper half of the door. They had little bright red curtains on them, and made Flo think of her dolls' house. All sorts of things were hung from nails on the walls; cooking pans, and cups, and jugs, and brushes. There was a tiny stove, with a real chimney to it. Flo thought Victoria must use it in winter-time; for it would be very hot and fusty to have it lighted in summer weather like this. There were pictures, too. One, at the end of the bed, of the Good Shepherd. And that reminded Flo of what she had almost forgotten, that she had not said her prayers.

But then, she generally said them by her bedside when she had put on her night-gown; and to-night she was sleeping in her day clothes!

She knelt down and shut her eyes now and prayed for Dad and all her friends and then for herself.

Then she laid herself on the bed and pulled over her the rug Victoria had shown her.

She seemed to have shut her eyes for about half a minute when she awoke and saw that it was morning, and that Victoria had brought her some water in a basin. She was able to wash her face in it, while Victoria sat on the doorstep with the baby on her knees, her hand held up over her eyes, looking at something.

"I do like you, Victoria," said Flo, coming over to peep

## Flo and the Gipsies

at the baby for about the twentieth time, "and the baby."

Victoria said: "Yes, poor mite, he ain't got a father now." And then, after a minute: "Tom went off a long time ago, with old Joe. You was sleeping, missy, so I let you be. Here be your dad, most like."

Flo rushed back to the door again; and there was Dad with Tom and old Joe. "Oh, Dad, dear Dad!" cried Flo, and flew into his kind arms.

"My little Flo," said Dad, and he held her very tight, as if he would never let her go.

Dad wasn't crying; but Flo knew that never, never, never would she pain him so again. She felt very sorry for Victoria's baby, who had no kind forgiving Dad like hers.

She told Dad how kind Victoria had been, while Victoria was inside the caravan looking for something.

Dad said: "I must give her something for that."

Tom and Victoria and Tom's wife looked very pleased.

Victoria pushed something into Flo's hand just as they were saying good-bye.

When they had gone a little farther along the road, and Flo had told Dad again how sorry she was and how kind Victoria had been and how pretty a caravan was, it seemed time to open the parcel.

So she did.

And inside was a tiny glass slipper laced with bright blue, and with "Good Luck be with you" written on its sole.

It was very beautiful; and though Flo felt she did not deserve it, she was glad when Dad said he hoped she would put it on her Treasure Shelf and never forget Victoria.

Of course, Flo never did forget!

*Jessie Leckie Herbertson.*





THE BALLOON

# THE BALLOON

I 'VE had my pretty pink balloon  
For more than twenty days,  
It's had the narrowest escapes  
In lots of diff'rent ways.

It flew away one blowy day,  
But luckily for me  
It stopped and let me pick it up,  
Just by the chestnut tree!

And then our baby took a pin,  
And thought he'd like to touch;  
He didn't think a tiny prick  
Could hurt it very much!

And Rags, our dog, who thinks balloons  
Are playthings for a pup,  
Just chased it round and round the lawn,  
And tried to eat it up!

I'm very sure it must have been  
The best one in the shop;  
Perhaps it's just the one balloon  
That never will go pop!

*Natalie Joan.*

# THE CHÂTEAU THAT WAS NOT BOUGHT



If Auntie May had not married Mr. Valentine Venner, this story would never have happened.

Our new uncle was rather old, and he had made such a lot of money out of Venner's pickles that he stopped making any more, and bought a big house in the country and another in London, and then he married Auntie May.

They didn't seem to live in their grand houses much, because they were always travelling, and when we broke up for the summer holidays Mother had a lovely surprise for us. Jim and I were to go with Uncle and Auntie for a motor tour in France.

You see, we'd lived in Paris from being tiny babies till Jim was ten and I was nine, but we had to come to England then because Daddy's work in Paris was finished.

Well, neither Uncle nor Auntie could speak French, at least not the sort that real French people would understand, and Uncle Valentine had made up his mind to buy a château in France, and he wanted us to help him.

Mother said it was only because she knew that Davis was a capable chauffeur that she was letting us go. Uncle had learnt to drive, but Auntie always begged him not to. Jim and I *knew* she was frightened of him driving, and we *thought* that Uncle Valentine was frightened too.

Well, it was when we were right in the middle of Normandy that our adventures started. We had not seen any kind of a château that Uncle Valentine wanted to buy. He said they were not *old* enough, and he never stopped long anywhere. We lived in a breathless whirl, flying along the roads all day, and eating

## The Château that was not Bought

hurried meals in strange places, because Uncle was always determined to get to a certain place to stay a certain night.

But one evening, when Uncle had made up his mind like that, it just didn't happen. We came to a village about eight o'clock, and, instead of going through it, Davis stopped in front of a queer old inn.

"What's the matter? What's this?" Uncle began, and Davis turned round and we saw that his face was as white as anything.

"I can't drive any farther," he said. "I'm in for a bout of malaria." (You see, he'd been in Mesopotamia all through the War.)

Uncle Valentine was dreadfully annoyed, not about Davis being ill, but about having to stay in the village till he was better, because that might be days or even a week. It really seemed as if Uncle could not bear to be still.



"I can't drive any farther"

## The Château that was not Bought

“I’ll drive the car myself,” he said at last. “We’ll just tour round and call back for Davis when he’s better.”

Auntie did all she could to stop him, but it was no use, and the next morning we started.

Uncle Valentine sat with his shoulders hunched up, and his eyes fixed on the road in front, and when we spoke to him he snapped at us. We *did* go. It was a wonder to Jim and me how we ever got round corners, and going down hills made us feel funny inside.

We stopped for lunch and had a picnic in a lovely wild place with woods on each side, but almost before we’d finished Uncle was wanting to start off again. He had been studying his road map, and now he said we should have to hurry or we should not get where we wanted that evening. Of course, he meant where *he* wanted to be.

Then the funny thing happened. The car wouldn’t start. Uncle tried everything. He twisted all the funny little handles, he got out the tools and hammered here and there, and he crawled underneath the car, but nothing happened.

His face got redder and redder, and Auntie peered about and asked him if he was sure he knew which thing *ought* to start it, and he told her to try and talk sense. Then the little French girl came along, and Jim and I told her what had happened.

“There is no house nearer than the château,” she said, “and the village is five miles away. But do not distress yourselves. I shall arrange everything.”

After that we moved in a whirl. Suzette—that was the little French girl’s name—took Uncle and Auntie and Jim and me and managed us. She acted as if she was fifty instead of only ten, and, before we really knew it, we had gone down a lane and through an

## The Chateau that was not Bought

old, old gateway, with huge stone lions sitting on the gateposts, into the most exciting looking château.

We were welcomed by Suzette's grandmother, the dearest, sweetest old lady, dressed in ever such shabby clothes, but with what they call in grown-up books the "air of a duchess".

We soon found out that she and Suzette lived alone in the château, except for old Pierre and his grandson Lucien who did the work. (Lucien was grown up and knew about motors, and he did not have any trouble to start the car and drive it into the court-yard.) Suzette's father had been killed in the Great War, and her mother had died when she was quite little.

We couldn't help seeing that they were terribly poor, and Uncle Valentine was ever so excited because this was just the sort of château he wanted to buy. Suzette took us all over it while he and Auntie talked to Madame de Maurescon. She showed us the secret room where her great-great-grandfather and grandmother hid in the French Revolution, and we were thrilled.

"But, see you," she said, "it would not be necessary to sell our beloved château had it not been for that. Our family was very rich then, and my great-great-grandfather had a valet whom he trusted with everything. When the Revolution came the family plate and jewels, and a great deal of money too, were hidden in a secret place known only to Simon the valet. My great-great-grandfather said that if two people knew it it would be no longer a secret."

Suzette was terribly excited as she told us this.

"Then," she went on, "a short time after the fortune was hidden Simon disappeared. It was said he had gone over to the revolutionists and taken the treasure with him, but we cannot believe it—we think the good Simon was true."

"But haven't you searched for the treasure?" asked Jim.

## The Château that was not Bought

“Certainly,” said Suzette. “Every generation has hoped to find it. It was thought to be hidden in the secret room, but no! And now the old château must be sold.”

We felt horrid about it, especially when Uncle Valentine sent for us to help him to buy the château, and Madame de Maurescon cried a little, and old Pierre went about muttering and shaking his head.

The room we were in looked out on to the courtyard, and we could see the two great gateposts with the stone lions crouching on top of them. Uncle Valentine had nearly bought the château when Suzette suddenly screamed and dashed out through the open French window.

Running across the courtyard towards the gate was a small black kitten, and close behind it ran a big dog, snapping and snarling viciously. We were sure the kitten would be pounced on before Suzette reached it, but it was so mad with terror that it did not stop at anything, and, as it came to the gate, it gave a wild spring and actually scrambled up one of the posts.

The dog yapped savagely below, but the kitten never stopped till it was seated safely on the lion’s head.

Lucien came out then and chased the dog away, but Suzette could not coax the kitten down again, and at last Lucien fetched a ladder. He climbed up and put a hand out for the kitten, but it sprang away from him on to the lion’s tail.

Now, Lucien could not reach it except by standing on the very top of the ladder and stretching his arm across the lion’s neck, and as he did this we all cried out in surprise, for he must have touched a secret spring that nobody had ever found before, and the lion’s head swung slowly round and out from its body.

For a moment Lucien looked as if he would fall. Then he gave a wild shout and, pushing his arm into the lion’s body, drew

## The Château that was not Bought



He put a hand out for the kitten

out a small square iron box. He was quite white with excitement as he came down the ladder, and so were old Pierre and Madame de Maurescon, who had come out. And when the box was opened it was full of gold pieces and jewels, and there were ever so many more boxes hidden in the gatepost, and Uncle Valentine nearly *cried* when he found that he could not buy the château after all.

But Jim and I were glad, and Suzette was wild with happiness.

"He was faithful after all, the good Simon," she said, and, though we never found out, everybody thought that he had been guillotined because he had refused to betray his master and mistress.

We go to stay with Suzette every summer now, and the château is not shabby any more, but Uncle Valentine has never found another so old, and he has stopped wanting to buy one.

Constance Heward.



## THE BIRTHDAY BROOK

**W**HEN I was nine years old Uncle Jim gave me a set of gardening tools.

“It’s the nicest present I’ve had,” I said when I thanked him.

“Not half so nice as something I had given me on *my* ninth birthday,” said Uncle Jim.

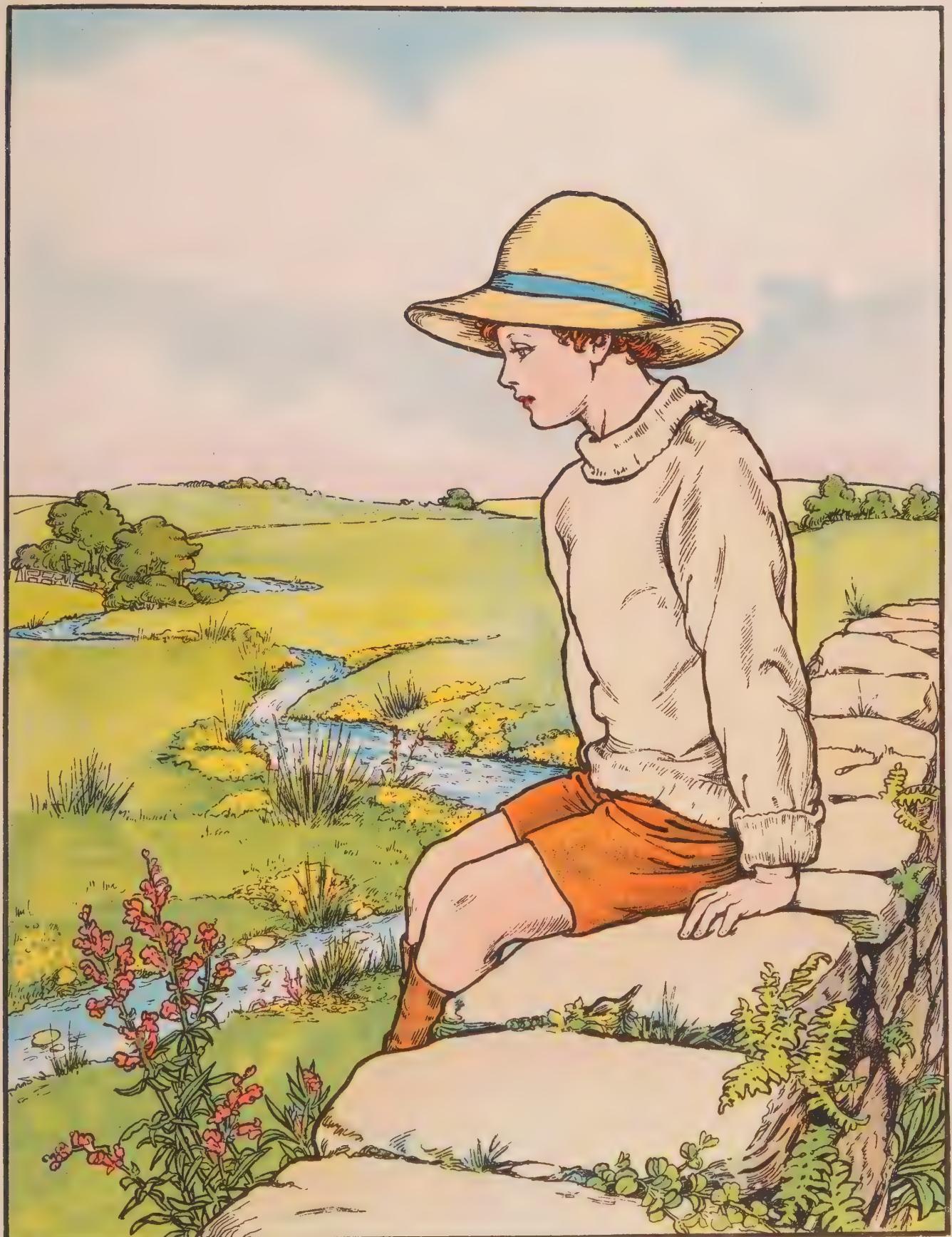
“What was that?” I asked in great curiosity.

“Why, a brook,” answered Uncle Jim.

“Oh, what a funny present!” I said. “Do tell me about it.”

So this is Uncle Jim’s story:

A few months before my ninth birthday we went to live in the country. The house was old and rambling and stood in a large garden, a garden that took my fancy at once, for it was full of surprises. There were winding paths and steep stone steps; little green lawns between high hedges; banks of moss between tall trees; and at the very end was an apple-orchard, bounded by a stone wall. When I climbed it and looked over, I could see a green meadow stretching away into the distance; and, just at the far side of the wall, a sparkling brook that sped along between grassy banks lined with marsh marigolds. A little lower down I



THE BIRTHDAY BROOK

## The Birthday Brook

could see a tiny waterfall, just where the brook curved out and away across the meadow.

“Why, oh, why,” I used to think, “isn’t it just *inside* the orchard instead of just *outside*?”

How I should have enjoyed playing there, if only it had been part of the orchard!

So much did I love the sight of that little stream that I went round to the meadow gate one day and across the field to look at it more closely.

But it wasn’t the same brook, somehow, seen from the other side of the wall, and I didn’t care to play there often.

One day I was out for a walk with my father when a little pony chaise passed us, and inside sat an old lady in a grey bonnet and cloak, holding a white parasol above her.

I asked my father who she was.

“The old lady,” he told me, “who owns the meadow beyond our orchard.”

“Then the brook is hers too,” I thought.

Before long I saw her again. One afternoon—it was the day before my birthday—I had gone by myself to the little village a mile away to fetch a door-mat that had been sent there to mend. I had started for home again, the mat rolled up beneath my arm, and was half-way down the village street when a heavy thunder-storm came on. While the downpour lasted I ran for shelter to the nearest doorway. A minute later I heard a horse’s hoofs in the distance, and then down the street came the little pony chaise and pulled up at the tall house that stood next to my doorway. Then I remembered that it was there the old lady lived. I watched her as she prepared to get out of the pony chaise from beneath the hood, holding the white parasol above her as she hesitated on the step and looked down at the rain—as it danced up from the wet

## The Birthday Brook

pavement—and then across to the doorstep opposite. All at once I thought of my door-mat, and next minute I had put it down on the pavement for her to step upon, and soon she was standing beneath her own doorway, looking down at me in surprise.

“Thank you, Sir Walter Raleigh,” she said. I suddenly felt very shy and embarrassed, and hurriedly picking up my door-mat, I dashed away with it, only to fall headlong over an uneven bit of pavement before I had gone more than a few yards.

The manservant ran to help me up, and although I protested I was none the worse, the old lady ordered him to take me indoors, there to wash and bandage my knees.

While he did so, she talked to me. She told me that she knew my father and the house where I lived, “just at the edge of my meadow”.

So then I told her that I often looked at it over the wall in our orchard, and how much I loved the little brook. When my knees were bandaged and I was ready to go, the old lady sent for lemonade and a large slice of cake for me.

“To-day is my birthday,” she said, while I ate it. “You see I’m not too old to have a birthday cake!”

“And *my* birthday is to-morrow,” I told her, “so I’ll be having birthday cake again.”

The thunderstorm had cleared, and soon I was hurrying home to tell of my adventure.

The surprise came next morning—a long important-looking envelope addressed to me. But though I tried to read and understand the writing inside, I couldn’t make it out at all.

So Father explained it to me. The old lady had given me a piece of her meadow, the piece with the brook running through it, adjoining our orchard. So the wall was moved back so that it stood at the farther side of the brook, and my wish to have it inside the garden came true on my ninth birthday.

*M. G. Rhodes.*



THE DISCOVERY

## THE DISCOVERY

HAVE you ever thought, I wonder, how exciting it would be  
If when *some* day you're exploring, on the sands beside  
the sea,

You came upon a little bay you'd never found before,  
And there beheld a pirate ship cast high upon the shore?

You'd give a shout of "Ship Ahoy!"—the proper thing to  
do

Before you board a vessel, in politeness to the crew;  
Then you'd clamber up the rigging of the fallen mizzen's  
wreck,

And wouldn't it be ripping when you reached the pirates'  
deck!

For there you'd find their cutlasses, their muskets, and  
their guns—

The Captain's cask of gingerbeer—the crew's supply of  
buns;

Whole hogsheads full of marzipan, and chests of cherry-cake,  
For that's the kind of cargo that the nicest pirates take!

Perhaps the last old pirate craft was looted long ago,  
And so there isn't one for you—but still you never know;  
And though you seek and never find, what could be better  
fun

Than hunting pirate treasure at the seaside in the sun?

W. K. H.

# THE FAIRY WHO HELPED WITH THE HOUSEWORK



NCE upon a time there was a Fairy Godmother, who lived in a tiny house in the middle of a little garden full of lavender bushes and butterflies. The little house had only one room, and in it was a four-post bed, and a hook for the Fairy Godmother's cloak; a high-backed chair stood by one window and a high-backed chair by the other, and over the fire-place were two tiny shelves. On the bottom shelf were platters and pipkins, and on the top one was a row of little boxes filled with charms; they looked like chocolate creams, and each kind was kept in a special box, and each box had its special place on the shelf.

Now, when she had tidied the little house the Fairy Godmother used to sit in her high-backed chair and think; and all day long people came tip-tapping at the door to ask her advice. "With so much to do I am getting worn out," she said. "I must get someone to dust about and sweep about and answer the door."

So she engaged a little fairy to help with the housework.

She was a very useful and busy little fairy; and when she had made everything as neat as neat could be, she would sit in the chimney-corner ready to answer the door as soon as anyone tapped.

Now, one day a gilded carriage drew up at the door.

"Quick, child!" cried the Fairy Godmother. "It is the Prince."

The little fairy ran to let him in, and he sat in one of the high-backed chairs and told his tale: he was about to seek a wife and had come to ask advice.

The Fairy Godmother listened and nodded, and nodded and listened. "This is no matter to decide quickly," said she. "Come again to-morrow, and we will see what we shall see."

So he drove away.

## The Fairy who Helped with the Housework



The Prince comes for advice

The Fairy Godmother thought and thought which of all her charms she should give him. The little fairy thought of him too; she thought of him all that day, and all that night, and next morning she thought of him more than ever.

Now, if people do one thing while they think very hard of something else they make mistakes: and the little fairy made a sad muddle of her work. Worst of all, when she dusted the little boxes of charms she put them all in the wrong order.

Presently, "Quick, child!" cried the Fairy Godmother. "Here is the Prince."

"There are many charms I might give you," said the Fairy Godmother when he was seated in the high-backed chair. "I

## The Fairy who Helped with the Housework

might make you so handsome that every Princess would fall in love with you."

"They must do that already," thought the little fairy.

"I might make you talk so well that no one could help listening to you."

"They could not help it now," thought the little fairy.

"But instead of these," said the Fairy Godmother, "I will give you a charm which will lead you to the most beautiful Princess." (Perhaps this Fairy Godmother was not quite as wise as she might have been.) "Quick child, bring me the seventeenth box from the right."

So the little fairy counted out the box and brought it to the Prince; and he took one of the charms and ate it.

Now, as you know, she had put the boxes in the wrong order on the shelf, so that the Prince, instead of swallowing the right charm, swallowed one to make him fall in love with the very next person he should see. And who should that be but the little fairy!

"How beautiful you are!" he exclaimed.

"Stuff and nonsense!" cried the Fairy Godmother.

"Your hair is like cob-web silk dipped in gold!" he said.

"Hoity-toity!" cried the Fairy Godmother.

But the Prince took no notice. "I love you with all my heart," he said to the little fairy, and went down on one knee.

"Lack-a-day!" cried the Fairy Godmother. "The child has given him the wrong box!"

But a charm, once swallowed, cannot be undone. "We shall have to make the best of it," said the Fairy Godmother.

So she went into the garden and caught two butterflies on the lavender bushes and turned them into ladies-in-waiting, and she touched the little fairy's dress and turned it into silvery satin; but there was no need to change the little fairy herself,

## The Fairy who Helped with the Housework

because she was already as good and as beautiful as a real Princess.

After that there was nothing to be done but for them to step into the gilded carriage and drive to the Palace to be married at once.

And when they had gone, the Fairy Godmother shook her head and sighed. "Dear-a-deary!" she said. "Now I shall have to find someone else to do the housework and answer the door. But I will always dust the top shelf myself," said the Fairy Godmother; "these young fairies are not to be trusted."

*Margaret Baker.*

## THE DRESSMAKER

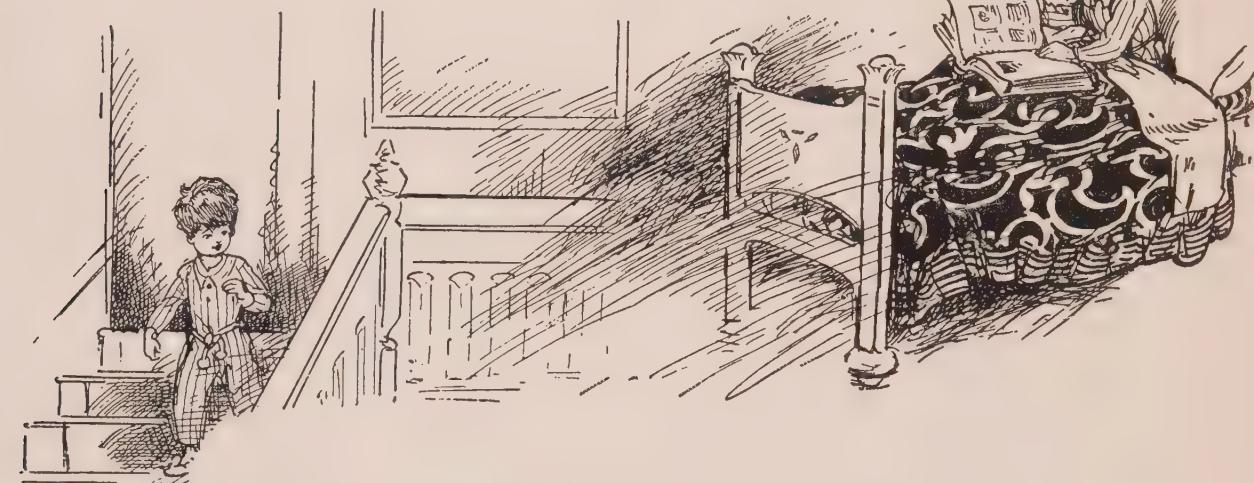
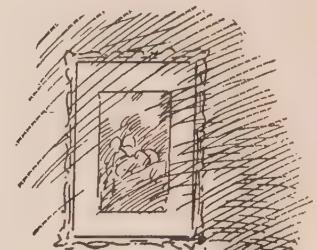
MISS PETTIGREW, our dressmaker,  
Lives up a narrow stair;  
She's got a room that's very nice  
To look at when you're there,  
With golden tea-things in a press,  
And Everlasting Flowers  
In bunches on the mantelpiece.  
I could stay there for hours.

Miss Pettigrew, the dressmaker,  
Goes clipping back and front  
With fingers that feel very cold,  
And scissors that are blunt.  
I always like to go to her;  
I like her little house;  
And—deep in my new pocket, once,  
She hid a sugar-mouse!

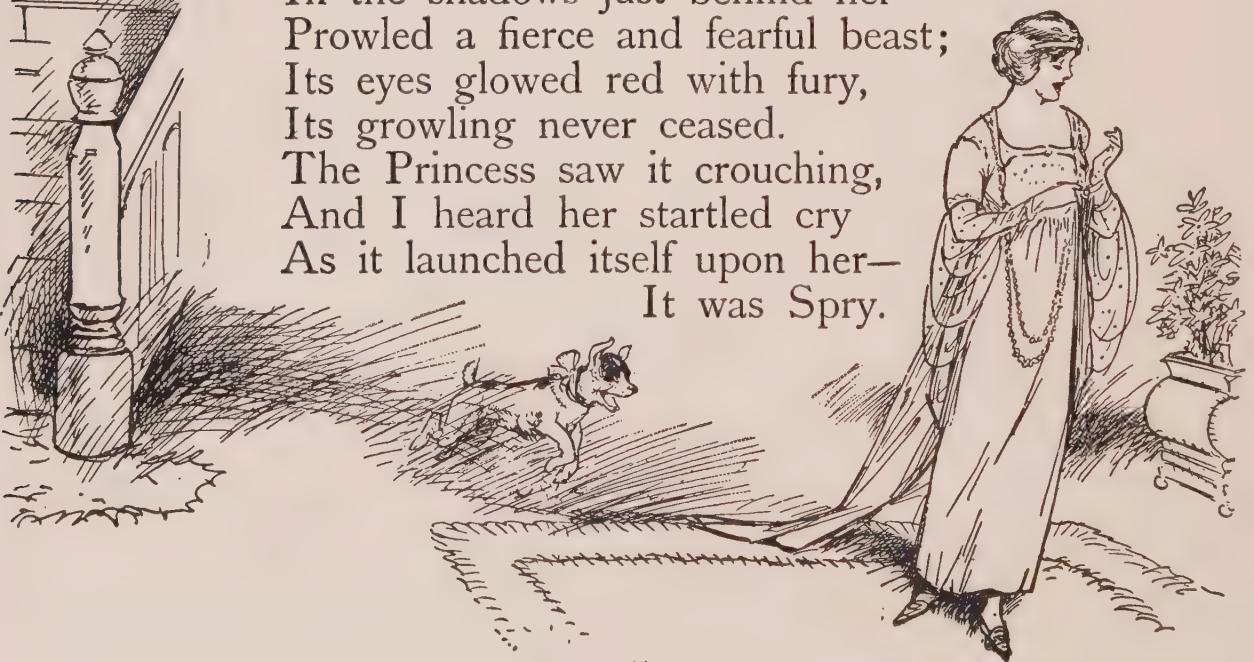
*Ethel Talbot.*

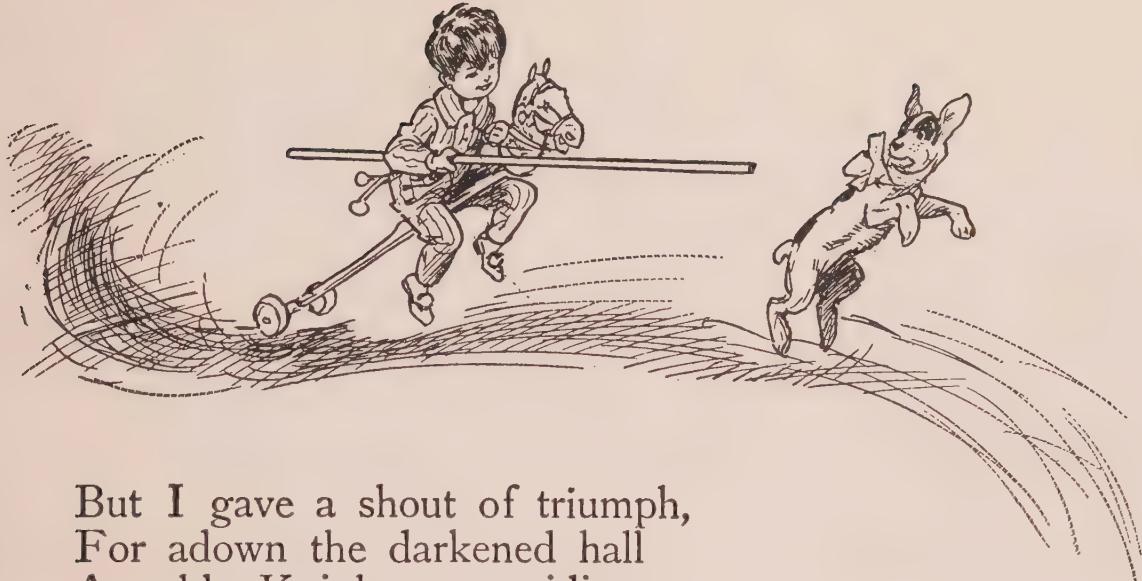
# TWILIGHT ADVENTURE

I WAS creeping down the stairway,  
When the lights were burning low,  
To the Land of Dim Enchantment  
In the shadowed hall below,  
When I saw a Princess standing,  
Robed in silks of rainbow hue,  
Crowned with gold, and shod with purple—  
It was you.



In the shadows just behind her  
Prowled a fierce and fearful beast;  
Its eyes glowed red with fury,  
Its growling never ceased.  
The Princess saw it crouching,  
And I heard her startled cry  
As it launched itself upon her—  
It was Spry.





But I gave a shout of triumph,  
For adown the darkened hall  
A noble Knight came riding  
From the mirror on the wall;  
His silver armour glimmered,  
His crest was proud and high,  
His lance was couched for action—

It was I.

He seized the lovely Lady  
Firmly by her silken waist.  
He lifted her before him,  
And he rode with her in haste.  
They left the monster dying—  
When a peril, far far worse,  
Rose to bar the path to safety—

It was Nurse.

*A. M. Westwood.*

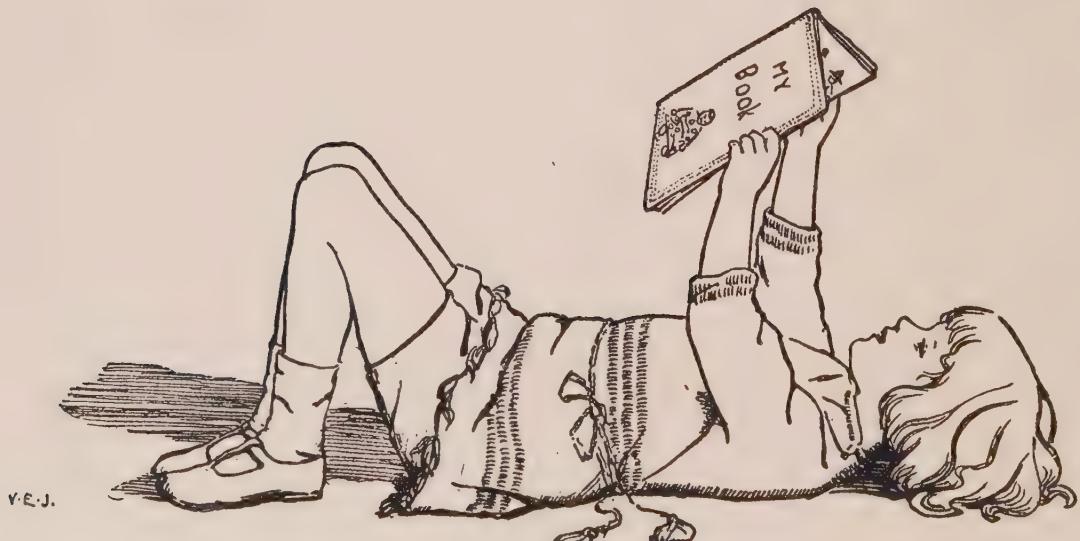


# MY STORY-BOOK

I 'M going to write a story-book all about the glen,  
And the garden, and the butterflies, and bees;  
Clever Mrs. Nuthatch, tiny Mrs. Wren,  
And the owl folk hiding in the trees.  
Lots about the buttercups smiling in the sun,  
It's *lovely*, and I 'm certain that I *can*,  
For I 've done the second chapter, and the third I 've just begun  
With a bit about my doll, Mimosa San!

I 'm going to draw the pictures (there must be illustrations!)  
And paint them too, and make them very grand;  
The crimson-petal poppy and the pink carnations  
I 'll copy from the flowers close at hand;  
And, when my book is written and the pictures tinted,  
It really will be wonderful indeed  
To think I did it all; *and oh! suppose it 's printed!*  
My story-book, for other girls to read!

*Natalie Joan.*

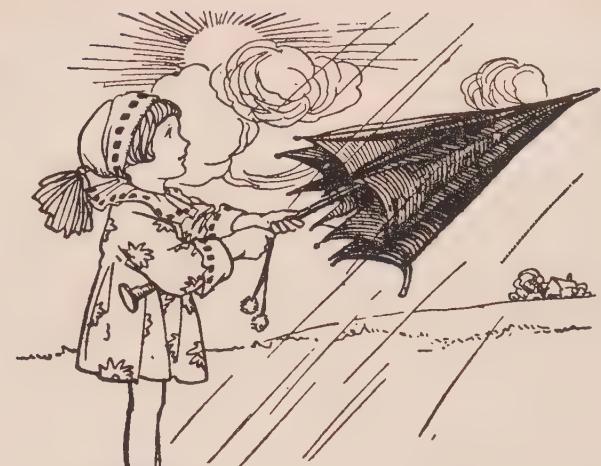




MY STORY-BOOK



1. Sunshine



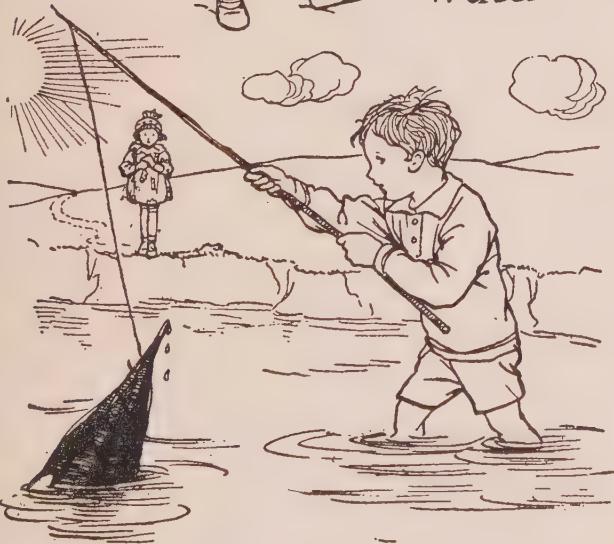
2. A Spot of Rain



3. A Puff of Wind



4. Disaster

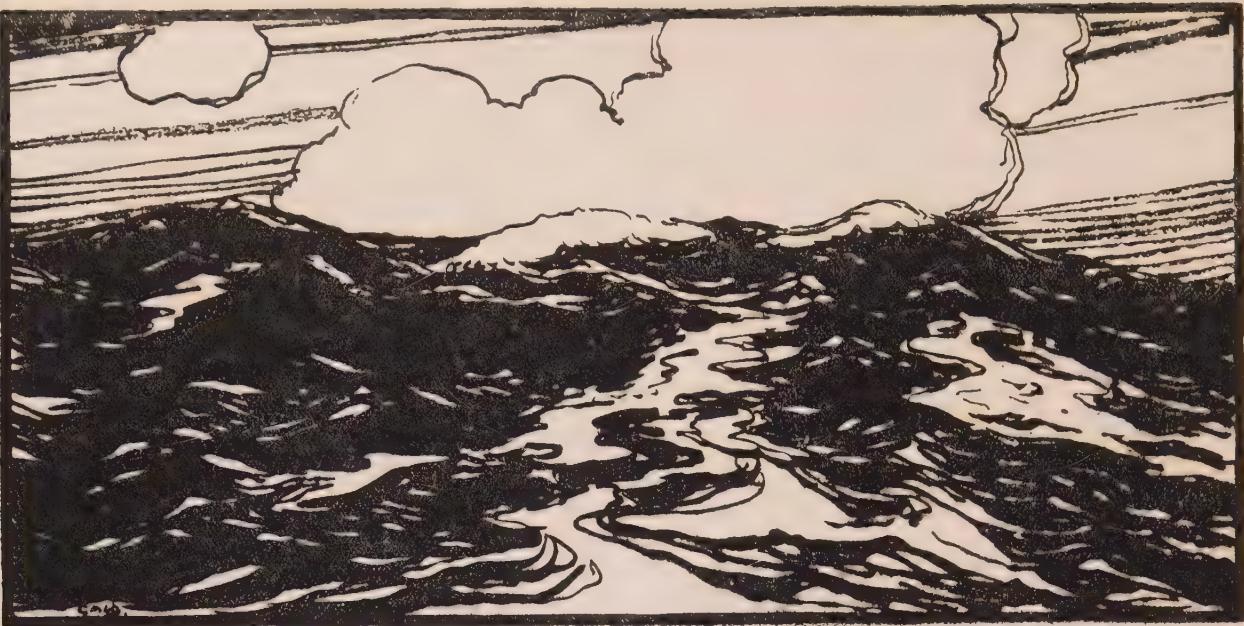


5. Rescue



6. "Thank you!"

Beth Cobb



## HOW THE SEA LEARNED TO COUNT

**H**AVE you ever noticed that every seventh wave is bigger than all the rest?

Once upon a time, many years ago, when the Sea was quite young (though it was very big even then), it didn't know how to behave itself. It used to plunge dreadfully and roll about, and it was so tumbly-wumbly all over that it was quite a bother to everybody. Sometimes, when it was very bad indeed, the biggest Whale used to be quite ill, and the Polar Bear didn't feel ready for dinner. The Penguin, too, used to complain about it—he said it made him dizzy to watch it—and the Walrus said it gave *him* a headache, which is most unusual for a walrus. Even the Limpet wanted to find fault with the Sea, but *it* had to hold on to the rocks so tightly that it simply couldn't speak, and nobody *ever* found out what it wanted to say.

One day the Sea behaved so badly that all the animals and

## How the Sea Learned to Count

fishes in it were very much annoyed, and the Whale said to the Walrus that it "wouldn't do".

"I simply don't know my head from my tail, and that's not at all convenient," said the Whale. "If the Sea *must* get itself into lumps, it really must tell us where its lumps are going to be."

"It doesn't know that itself," replied the Walrus; "ask it."

So the Whale said to the Sea: "Do you really not know where your lumps are going to be, or do you do it on purpose?"

"No," said the Sea, laughing, "my lumps just happen."

"Of course they happen; anybody can see that," answered the Whale. "But they happen so dreadfully much and so often, you know, it's really rather awkward for the rest of us—now isn't it?"

"You'll soon get used to it, I'm sure," said the Sea, "and anyway, I can't help it, it's just a *way* I have."

So the Whale and the Walrus and the Polar Bear and the Seal were quite downhearted, and the Limpet got fearfully tired holding on to the rocks, but nobody could think of anything useful to say. And every day the Sea got more lumpy and horrid.

After a very long time the Cod-fish got an idea.

"The very best thing is to count," said he.

"Count!" said the others. "What good will that do?"

"Hurrah! Let's start now," said the Penguin, who was so dizzy that he couldn't think clearly.

"*We're* not going to count, silly," said the Cod-fish.

"Oh! I thought we were to count so nicely that the Sea would be quiet for a minute or so and listen," said the Penguin humbly. "That would be something, wouldn't it?"

"We must teach the Sea to count. It must be quiet if it wishes to learn, and when it gets into the habit of counting it will never leave off," and the Cod-fish laughed a lot—you know

## How the Sea Learned to Count

what his mouth is like, so you can't doubt that he laughed, can you?

So the Cod-fish swam off to a place where the Sea wasn't as lumpy as usual, and began to count very loudly, one, two, three, up to twenty. After it had counted hard for a whole afternoon the Sea said: "What are you doing?" But the Cod-fish just went on counting.

"What *are* you doing?" said the Sea again.

"I'm counting," said the Cod-fish.

"Why?"

"Because it helps me to swim nicely."

"Would it help me to roll better, and be more lumpy?" asked the Sea.

And the Cod-fish said: "You might try, anyway," and he put his tail in front of his mouth so that the Sea shouldn't know he was laughing.

The Sea was quite interested. He began to count after the Cod-fish, but he never got past seven, somehow, and that annoyed him so much that even yet he hasn't left off trying. If you go down to the shore some day and watch the sea, you'll know that.

When he's in a very good mood he counts ever so softly, in little waves like this:



but when he is angry at not getting any farther—for he *can't* get past seven—he simply roars:



And what a noise he makes at seven, doesn't he?

*J. S. Elder.*

# • The Three Cats •



*Pictures by Warwick Reynolds*

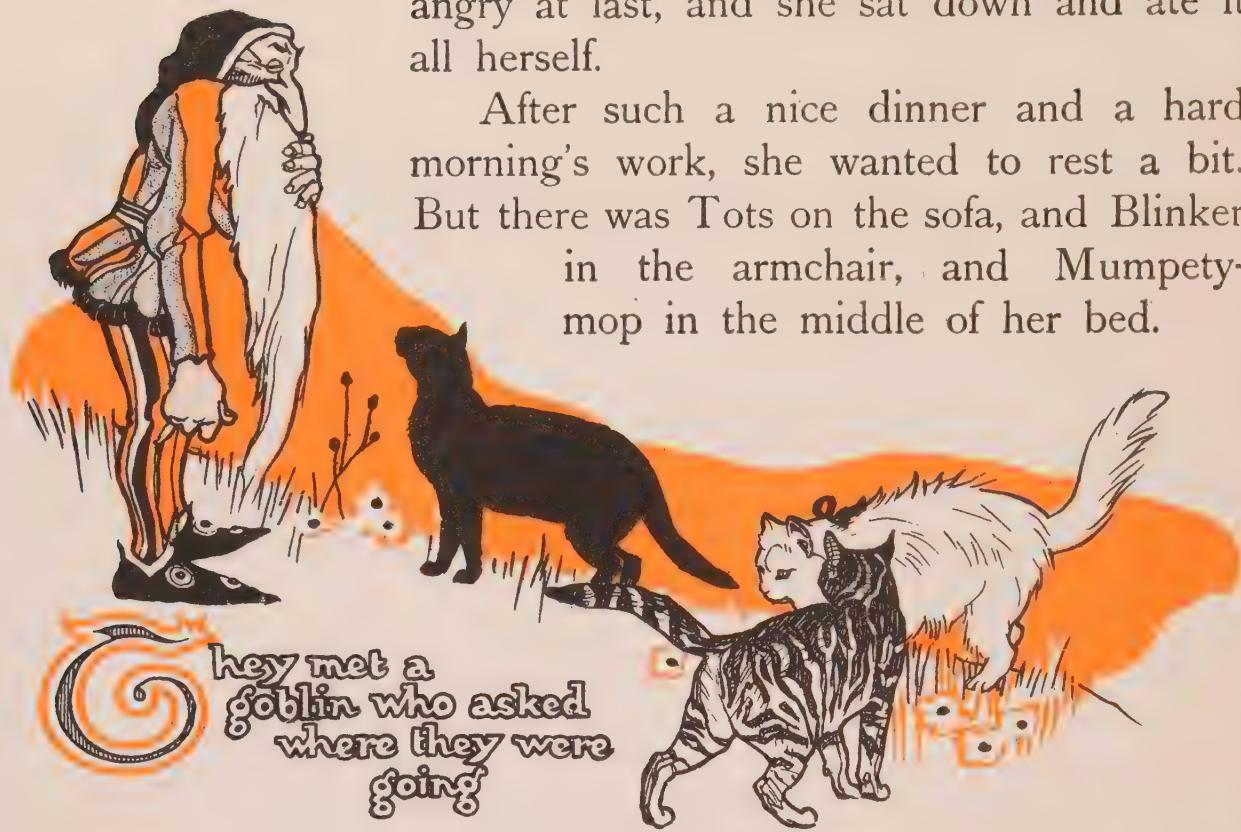
**T**HERE was an old woman who had three cats, and a terrible time she had between them. You see, Tots, the tabby, would eat nothing but fried salmon, and he always slept on the sofa; and Blinker, the black cat, would eat nothing but roast chicken, and he was always curled up on the armchair by the fire; while the white Persian (his name was Mumpety-mop) would never look at anything but the richest cream nor sleep anywhere but in the middle of the old woman's bed. As for their poor mistress, she had to be content with bread and cheese and the hearthrug.

One day, after she had spent the morning cooking, she laid the table for the cats, and put a lovely cutlet of salmon before Tots, and some delicious breast of chicken for Blinker, and a big saucer of cream before Mumpety-mop. And what did those dainty cats do, but turn up their noses at it all!

## The Three Cats

"Very well!" said the mistress, quite angry at last, and she sat down and ate it all herself.

After such a nice dinner and a hard morning's work, she wanted to rest a bit. But there was Tots on the sofa, and Blinker in the armchair, and Mumpety-mop in the middle of her bed.



**G**hey met a  
goblin who asked  
where they were  
going

"Here, I'm tired of this," said their mistress. She turned Blinker out of the armchair and sat down in it. Blinker went and got up beside Tots on the sofa, and Tots didn't like it. Such a swearing and spitting there was!

"Stop it!" cried the old woman, and turned them both off the sofa and lay down on it herself. Then they went and jumped up on the bed. Mumpety-mop was furious. With a fierce yell he bit Tots in the ear, and all three started fighting on the bed.

"Here, I can't stand this," said the old woman, and she turned them off and lay down on the bed herself. "Now you can go and lie on the hearthrug like other cats," she said.

Do you think those cats did? Not a bit of it. They put their

## The Three Cats

three tails up straight in the air and marched right out of the cottage into the woods.

Before they had gone far they met a goblin, who asked where they were going.

"We are looking for a new home," said Tots. "We want one where there is always plenty of salmon to eat."

"Turn to your right hand," said the goblin, "and you will find it."

"But *I* prefer chicken," said Blinker.

"Turn to your left hand then," said the goblin.

"I only eat cream," said Mumpety-mop, very haughtily.

"Go straight on then," said the goblin, chuckling.

"Thank you," said the three cats. "Good-day."

Tots went off to the right with his tail in the air.

He meant to show his old mistress that there were places where a cat could live on salmon without being expected to sleep on the hearthrug. He went on and on until the path ended on the bank of a river.

"This is very queer," thought Tots.

Just then he saw something silvery moving in the water. It was a big salmon.

"Bah!" said Tots in a rage. "Does the goblin think I can catch my salmon?"

He was just going away in disgust when he saw a man coming along with a rod over



hen the fisherman's back was turned, he jumped on the table and seized the fish

## The Three Cats



*There sure  
enough were  
plenty of  
plump  
chickens*

his shoulder and a basket on his back. Sticking out of the basket was the tail of a salmon.

“Aha!” said Tots to himself, and started to follow. Soon they came to a pretty little cottage on the outskirts of the wood, and Tots saw the man give the fish to his wife, telling her to cook it for supper.

“Purr!” said Tots, licking his lips as the nice smell floated out of the kitchen door.

But how surprised he was when he found that, instead of giving him the salmon, the fisherman and his wife were going to eat it themselves! Tots was so hungry that, when the fisherman’s back was turned, he jumped on the table and seized the fish to carry it off.

What a commotion there was! The wife screamed, the children jumped about, and the man caught up Tots by the scruff of the neck.

“You wicked thief!” he exclaimed, and he gave Tots a sound beating. Then he threw him out of the back door and shut it.

Poor Tots was too surprised even to scratch. He had never been treated like that in all his life. He limped back into the wood, licking the last taste of the salmon off his whiskers.

He had not gone far when he met the goblin.

“Hullo!” said the goblin. “Where are you off to now?”

“I’m going back to my old mistress,” said Tots, and the goblin chuckled as he pointed out the way.

## The Three Cats

Meanwhile Blinker was trotting along the left-hand path.

He had not gone far when he found himself in a farmyard. There, sure enough, were plenty of plump chickens, but they were all alive and running about. Blinker had gone nearer to look at them, when a loud bark made him jump.

“Thieves! Robbers! Wow! Wow!” barked the yard dog. “Here’s a cat looking at the chickens. Wow!”

Luckily it was chained up, but it frightened Blinker very much. He stole softly away through the nearest door and found himself in the stable.

Sitting on the corn-chest, washing herself, was the stable cat.

“What’s Rover barking about?” she asked.

“He’s angry because I was looking to see which chicken I would like for supper.”

“But you mustn’t eat chickens!” exclaimed the stable cat, scandalized.

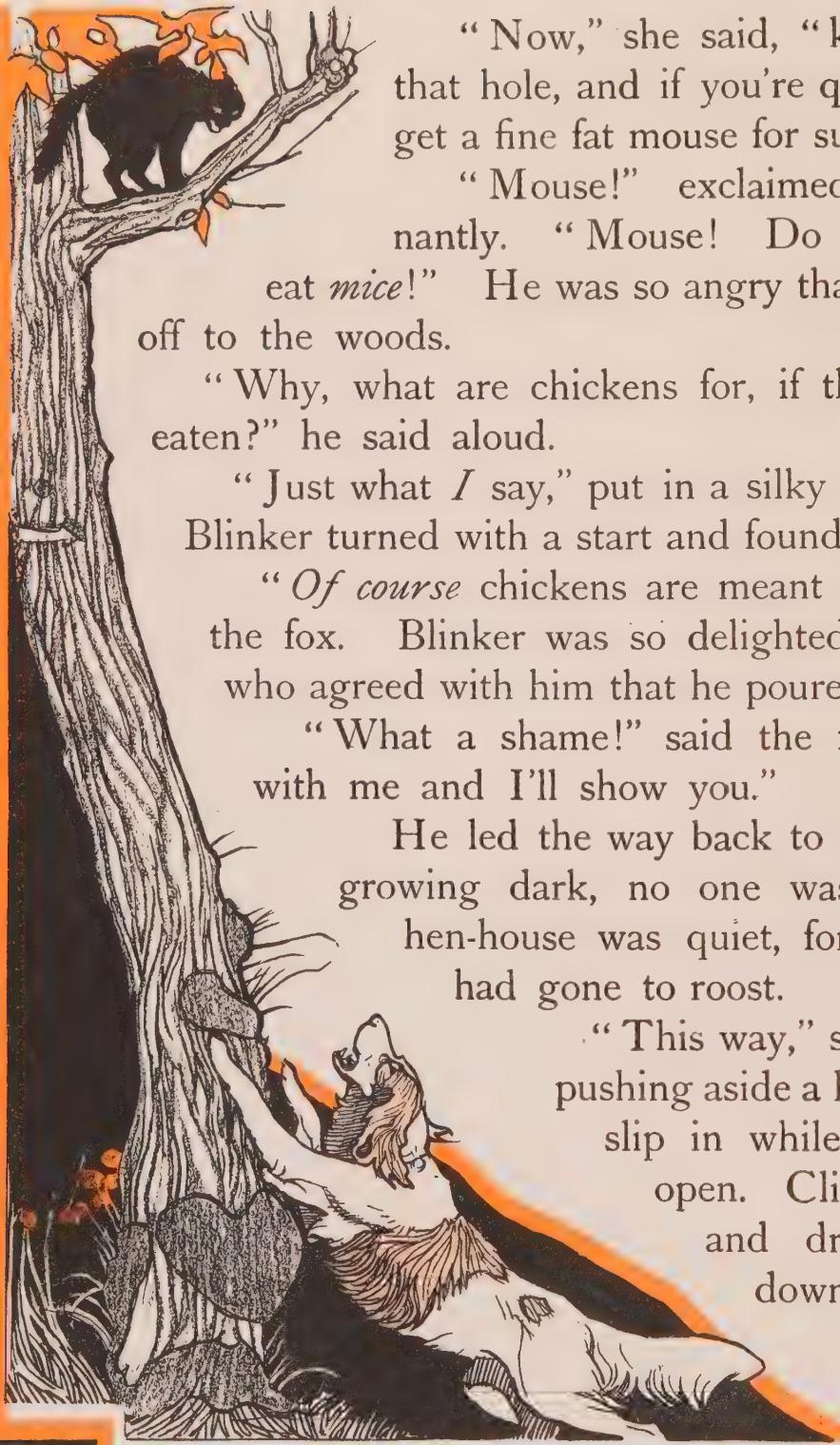
“What else *is* there to eat?” said Blinker loftily.

“I’ll show you,” said the stable cat in a friendly way. She led him to a corner of the loft and crouched down.



**B**linker turned with a start and found a fox close by

## The Three Cats



"Now," she said, "keep your eyes on that hole, and if you're quick enough you'll get a fine fat mouse for supper."

"Mouse!" exclaimed Blinker indignant. "Mouse! Do you expect me to eat *mice*!" He was so angry that he went straight off to the woods.

"Why, what are chickens for, if they are not to be eaten?" he said aloud.

"Just what *I* say," put in a silky voice behind him. Blinker turned with a start and found a fox close by.

"*Of course* chickens are meant to be eaten," said the fox. Blinker was so delighted to find someone who agreed with him that he poured out all his story.

"What a shame!" said the fox. "But come with me and I'll show you."

He led the way back to the farm. It was growing dark, no one was about, and the hen-house was quiet, for all the chickens had gone to roost.

"This way," said the fox softly, pushing aside a loose board. "You slip in while I hold the hole open. Climb on the perches and drive the chickens down."

Blinker squeezed through, then

**Wow! Wow! went Rover, rushing after him.  
Blinker flew for the woods and rushed up a tree**

## The Three Cats



**H**e set to work, and lapped, and lapped, till his tongue was tired

with a great spring he landed on the upper perch, knocking two chickens off.

Next moment the place was in an uproar. All the fowls began cackling and fluttering, Rover started barking, and a man came running, shouting, "There's a fox in the hen-roost!"

One of the chickens, seeing the hole, bolted through. The fox seized it and made off, never waiting for Blinker, who jumped down just as the board slipped back into place. He was trapped.

Up came the man, only stopping to let Rover loose. He opened the door, brandishing a stick. But luckily it was too dark for him to see at first, and Blinker dashed out.

"Wow! Wow!" went Rover, rushing after him. Blinker flew for the woods, and rushed up a tree.

"Oh, would you!" barked Rover. "Well, I can wait till you come down."

Blinker did not know what to do. The cold night wind blew his fur the wrong way, and he was ever so hungry.

Suddenly he heard a rustle, and there was the goblin.

"Did you find the sort of home you wanted?" asked the goblin.

"No," said Blinker. "But if only that dog would go away, I know where I could find it."

## The Three Cats

"All right," said the goblin. He whistled like the man, and Rover ran back to the farm.

As soon as it was safe, Blinker climbed down and set off for the old woman's cottage.

Now Mumpety-mop had gone on straight through the wood, and soon came upon a dairy. There on the shelf stood big basins of the richest cream.

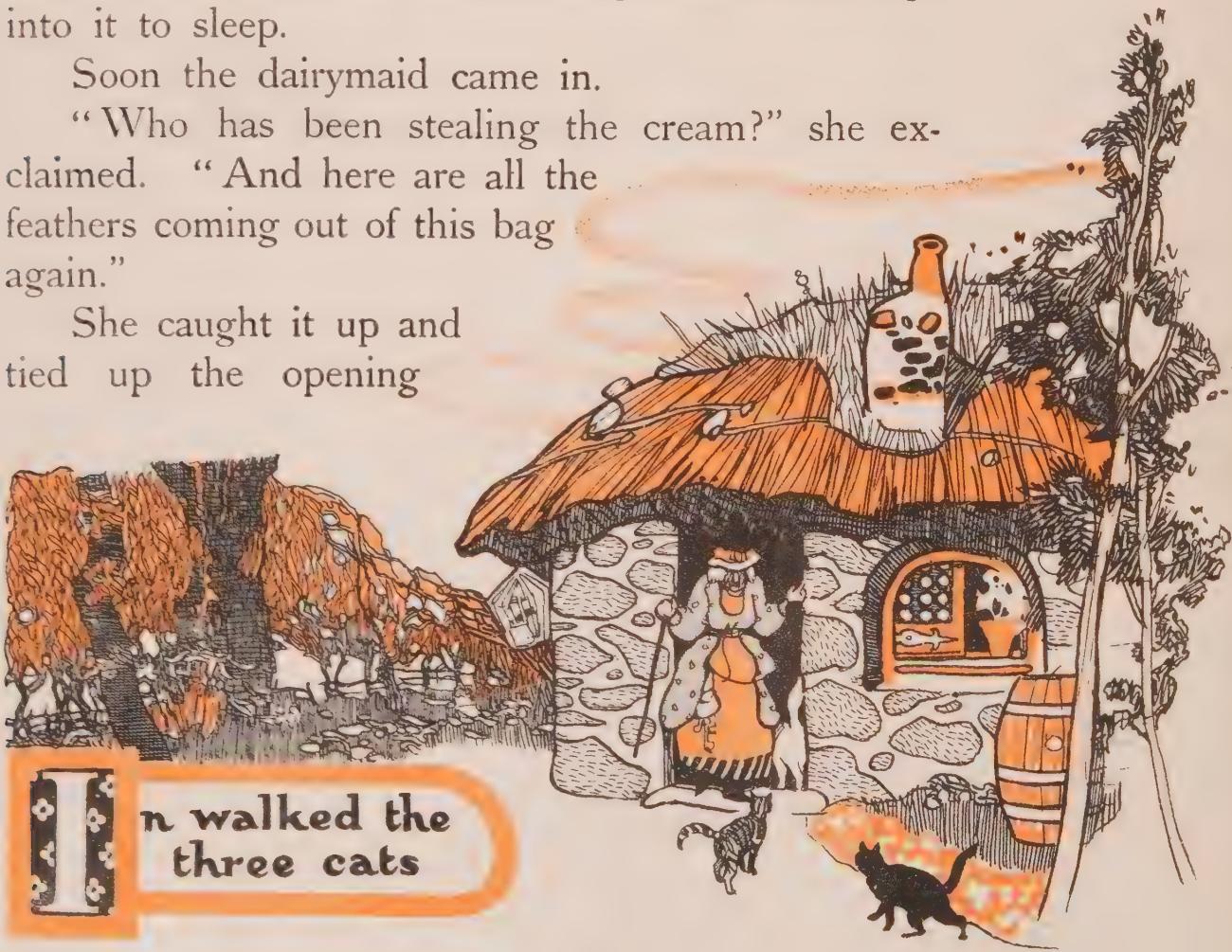
"Ah!" purred Mumpety-mop. "At last I have found a home fit for such a fine cat as I am."

He set to work, and lapped, and lapped, and lapped till his tongue was quite tired. Then he found a bag of feathers which the farmer's wife was saving for pillows, and crept into it to sleep.

Soon the dairymaid came in.

"Who has been stealing the cream?" she exclaimed. "And here are all the feathers coming out of this bag again."

She caught it up and tied up the opening



In walked the  
three cats

## The Three Cats

with a bit of string. Mumpety-mop woke to find himself fastened in and nearly smothered with feathers. He kicked and struggled in his fright, and the maid screamed to see the bag tumbling about the floor, and ran away to tell her mistress that it was bewitched.

Her mistress came to the dairy, and when she saw the way the bag was rolling about by itself, she was sure it was enchanted, and called one of the farm men to take it to the stream and throw it in. The man took the bag, hurried to the stream, threw it in, and ran away.

How Mumpety-mop kicked and struggled! Luckily the string got loose and the bag opened. In poured the water, but the cat had got his head out, and he scrambled clear. The bank was near by, and Mumpety-mop crawled out, dripping wet and covered with weed and feathers.

“Ha! ha! ha!” laughed the goblin, suddenly meeting him. “You do look funny! Where are you off to? You are going right away from the cream.”

“I am going home,” said Mumpety-mop, and he set off through the wood as fast as he could go.

Late that night the old woman heard a scratching at the door, and when she opened it, in walked the three cats and curled up meekly on the hearthrug.

*M. Braidwood.*





## THE MAGIC OF THE ALMOND BLOSSOM



REAT-AUNT JANE'S sitting-room was a wonderful place, with quaint samplers, brass candlesticks, china bowls full of sweet scents, and other interesting things. Peggy loved them all, especially the Lady from Japan who stood on the china cabinet. Her dress was like the sky, dotted with golden stars; her sash was rose colour. She wore a head-dress of gold, and carried a tiny silver fan.

To-day there was a warm spring sun, and the pink almond tree outside the window had burst into flower.

Great-Aunt Jane was in her sweetest temper, and as a great treat had lifted down the Lady from Japan for Peggy's eager hands to hold a few moments.

"Oh, you darling!" cried Peggy, "now I can have a good look at you." She started; the hand that held the fan was moving! Yes, it *was* a yawn, and the weeniest, sleepiest voice said:

## The Magic of the Almond Blossom

“How nice to be awake again. Surely the almond blossom is late this year?” She clapped her hands, and instantly the almond tree was inside the great blue jar, its branches stretched all round, its scent filling the room.

Peggy found herself sitting beside it on a silken rug before the dinkiest tea-things, and opposite sat a little man, and a dainty lady in a kimono, with flowers in her hair.

“Oh, you are alive!” said Peggy.

“Certainly,” said the little man. He pointed to the Lady from Japan. “She wakes once a year for an hour, the day the almond tree blossoms, and summons us to her tea-party.”



The Lady from Japan has a tea-party

## The Magic of the Almond Blossom

“Every year,” said Peggy. “May I come again?”

“Yes,” laughed the silvery voice of the Lady from Japan, “if you come the day the almond blossoms.”

“How shall I know?” asked Peggy.

“Hush!” said the little man.

Through the scent of the almond blossom came the tinkling chime of a clock.

“Oh!” cried Peggy in dismay. “It’s not an hour yet. I want to know how you came here, I want——”

She found herself gazing into the face of the Lady from Japan, but the pink lips were silent, the fan was back in its place.

“Yes, it *is* an hour,” said Great-Aunt Jane’s voice, “and you’ve had my precious Japanese figure all this time. What a mercy it’s not broken!”

Peggy watched her place the Lady from Japan carefully back. Then she saw *inside* the cabinet two tiny figures on silken mats, and in front of them the wee-est cups and saucers.

“So there they are,” she said. “I will come every day next spring to see Great-Aunt Jane, so that I shall not miss the magic of the almond blossom.”

*Jessie Phillips Morris.*







GREAT-GRANDMA'S SAMPLER

## SINCE GRANDMA'S DAY

GRANDMAMA polished her spectacles bright,

For her sight isn't good as it used to be.

I'm only a tomboy girl of eight,

But oh! how she stared and stared at me.

She lives in the country, but came up to town;

She looked me up and she looked me down,

At my fair bobbed hair, and my legs all bare,

And did nothing but stare and stare and stare.

"What are you looking at, Grandma dear?"

And under her glasses I spotted a tear.

"When I was a little girl," she said,

"I had quite long ringlets all over my head;

I had to wear frills and furbelows,

And very long petticoats down to my toes.

But as for you, child, you've so little to wear!"

And how she did stare and stare and stare.

"How horrid it must have been, Gran, for you.

When you wanted to jump, what did you do?"

"I was never allowed to romp with boys,

But played with dolls and ladylike toys."

I felt so sorry I sat on her knee,

For I'm sure that she wished she was young like me,

To romp and scamper and tussle and play.

I'm glad things have changed since Grandma's day.

*Edith Stanley.*

# CURDS AND WHEY



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

KING DUFF of Duffet.

QUEEN MUFF.

"LITTLE MISS MUFFET" (their daughter).

THE SPIDER (Prince Lancelot, under a spell).

SUPERBUS } Princes who come to seek Miss  
ABSURDUS } Muffet.

TROTT } Princes who come to seek Miss  
FESTE } Muffet.

HUGH, a page.

LORDS-IN-WAITING.

LADIES-IN-WAITING.

MINSTRELS.

ACT I, SCENE I. *Tuffet discovered in centre of stage. Enter, Left, King Duff, very stern; Queen Muff, in tears; Hugh follows, leading Spider by a chain.*

*King Duff.* My dear, you really must restrain your grief,  
The Princess will arrive for our relief;  
Now the reward is offered, I'll be bound  
It won't be long before our darling's found.  
For I've proclaimed that he who finds Miss Muffet  
Shall win her hand and half our realm of Duffet.

## Curds and Whey

(*Turning to the Spider.*) You horrid monster, cause of all our sorrow,

You shall be crushed before this time to-morrow!

(*Spider raises one leg appealingly.*)

*King Duff.* What! . . . You dare to say

You did *not* frighten our dear child away!

How did you chance to capture it, brave Hugh?

*Hugh.* Your Highness, 'twas the easiest thing to do:

I heard a shriek of terror from the dairy,

And, rushing to that place so cool and airy,

I met our buxom Fanny flying fast,

Who screamed: "That horrid Spider!" as she passed.

There sure enough inside I quickly found him,

With bowls of cream and curds and whey around him,

Filling Miss Muffet's bowl with curds and whey,

The bowl he must have stolen yesterday.

*King Duff.* A thief as well as coward! He needs must die!

*Hugh* (*looking doubtfully at the size of his boot.*) He's somewhat large—  
a roller shall I try?

*Queen Muff* (*shuddering*). Don't talk of it! Your Highness, dearest Duff,

It does not seem to me he's sinned enough

To justify so terrible a fate.

Spare him till Muffet's found; she can relate

Exactly what occurred. Let her decide

What sort of punishment must be applied.

*King Duff.* By all the Nursery Rhymes! You are too kind!

Your mercy sounds like weakness to my mind;

But still your wishes I will not frustrate.

(*Trumpet sounds.*)

*Hugh.* The Princes, Sir, are standing at the gate.

*Queen Muff.* Why, so they are (*sound of footsteps*), and coming to the Pleasance!

*King Duff* (*to Hugh*). Remove that dreadful creature from our presence!

(*Exeunt Hugh and Spider.*)

(*Enter Superbus, Absurdus, Trott, and Feste; they bow to the King and Queen, who return their salute.*)

## Curds and Whey

*King Duff.* Most gallant Princes, you are welcome here,  
And soon, we hope, our heavy hearts you'll cheer.  
Our herald has made known our great distress,  
And also the reward for your success.

*Absurdus.* He has, your Highness, and we'll do our best—

*Superbus.* To crown with triumph this most solemn quest.

*Trott.* As for the one who's destined to succeed—

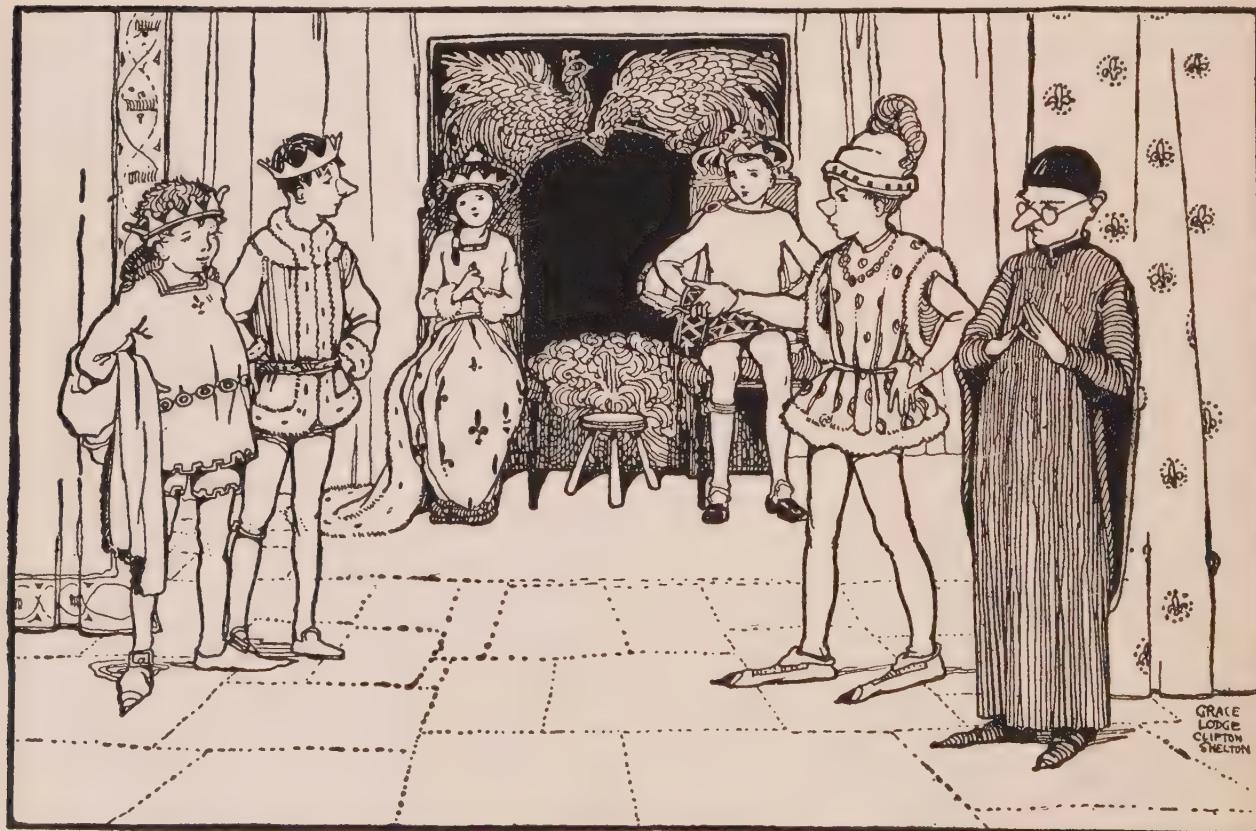
*Feste.* He'll be a very happy man indeed!

But let us to our task, the time is short—

By sunset, I believe we must report?

*King Duff.* Before the sun goes down your search must cease.

And we must then resort to the Police,  
A force whose usefulness I won't disparage,  
But think—instead of a romantic marriage,  
If all that comes of this exciting tale  
Is that our photos fill the *Duffet Mail!*



## Curds and Whey

*Trott.* Such a calamity we cannot risk,  
And therefore it behoves us to be brisk  
About our task. Your Highnesses, adieu!

(*Bows. Exit.*)

*Feste.* Your Majesties, I must be going too.

(*Bows. Exit.*)

*Absurdus.* And so must I. I shan't enjoy the jest  
If Princess Muffet's found by Trott or Festel

(*Bows. Exit.*)

*Superbus.* And I shall very soon be in the lurch  
If I don't join in this exciting search.

(*Bows. Exit.*)

*King Duff.* A knightly ardour in these Princes shows,  
And suitors might be uglier, I suppose.

*Queen Muff.* I never saw a less attractive crew,  
Outside the monkey-house in Duffet Zoo!

*King Duff (shocked).* My dear, you must not take this tone superior!  
Absurdus, though he *has* a quaint exterior,  
Has *tons* of gold—my wealth is quite inferior.  
Feste has discovered much about the stars—  
Even the death-rate on the planet Mars.  
Trott and Superbus over kingdoms reign,  
As rich as mine and half as big again.

*Queen Muff (pettishly).* Their wealth and brains do *not* appeal to me.  
(*Tearfully*) I wonder where my darling child can be.  
My grief is such that, though their looks are hateful,  
If they can find Miss Muffet I'll be grateful.  
Perhaps she's near at hand; let's go and see.  
*I'll* search the hen-pen, *you* the shrubbery.

*King Duff.* I will, my dear, but just before I go,  
I'll pin this notice up that all may know.

(*Stands notice board upon the Tuffet, reads*)

“Who finds the Princess, ere the sun goes down,  
Shall have her hand and share with us our crown.”

(*Exeunt, Right.*)

(*Enter, Left, Spider with broken chain; he reads the notice and bounds off, Right, excitedly.*)

## Curds and Whey



SCENE II. *King and Queen enthroned in state on either side of the Tuffet. Lords, ladies, and minstrels in attendance. Time—just before sunset.*

*King Duff.* In half an hour the sun will disappear.

*Queen Muff.* It's surely time they brought our *daughter* here.

*Lord.* Your Majesties, the Princes now approach,

I hear the rumbling of the royal coach.

*King Duff.* But have they found Miss Muffet? *That's* the thing.

(Enter Princes, Right, in last state of exhaustion, mopping their brows, &c.)

*Trott* (wearily). No tidings of your daughter, sir, we bring.

(*Queen Muff* begins to cry.)

*King Duff* (coldly). Since of this splendid chance you don't avail yourselves, we must count you as a hopeless failure.

There's nothing for it, though it's very hard,

I must refer the case to Scotland Yard.

## Curds and Whey

Or stay!—I think I can be more discreet—  
I'll send for Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street.

(To the Princes) By your long search you're wearied, I'm afraid.  
(To a Lord-in-Waiting) Bring hither sandwiches and lemonade,  
And nothing spare to entertain these princes.

Feste (gratefully). This feast your nobleness of heart evinces.

(*Exeunt Princes, Left.*)

King Duff (gazing Right). But who comes here? Miss Muffet, I declare!  
(Enter Miss Muffet, Right, limping, and followed closely by the Spider. King and Queen meet Miss Muffet and lead her to her Tuffet; Spider follows and sinks in a heap at her feet.)

Queen Muff. My darling child! You gave us such a scare!

Miss Muffet (embracing them). I'm very sorry to have been a worry.

You see, I went away in such a hurry,  
That as I flew towards the fairy dell,  
I caught my foot and twisted, as I fell,  
My ankle. In the cave I had to stay,  
And—but for bowls of lovely curds and whey  
Brought by this faithful friend (*strokes the Spider*), whom once I  
feared,  
But now to me he's very much endeared—  
I should have starved. My ankle would not bear me,  
And so he bore me home the pain to spare me.

Queen Muff (in horror). He bore you home?

King Duff. Now by my father's head!

Must Princess Muffet with a Spider wed!  
No she shall not. I've said the brute should die.  
My sympathies are wholly with the fly.

Miss Muffet (who has studied the notice meanwhile). I never thought to  
be a Spider's wife,  
But sooner than he should lose his life. (*Stoops and kisses  
the Spider.*)

Of you I don't know why I was afraid.

(Spider rises up, sheds his skin, and stands before her a handsome Prince. Sensation!)

Spider. Most gracious, pitiful, and lovely maid!  
At loathsome ugliness you did not wince—  
You've turned me back to what I was—a Prince.

## Curds and Whey



*King Duff (recovering from shock).* Most noble youth, are you by any chance

*The missing ruler of the realm of France?*

*Spider (bowing).* I am. And by your promise, King of Duffet,  
I claim her for my bride, sweet Mistress Muffet.

*(Draws her to him)* Your gracious Majesties, I do implore you,  
To see a welcome son-in-law before you.

With every comfort I can now provide her,  
Since she's released me from the rôle of Spider.

*King Duff.* I'm more than proud to have you as a son.

*Queen Muff (to both).* Your wedding shall be such a lovely one!  
*(Prince kisses Miss Muffet rapturously. King waves to the minstrels.)*

*King Duff.* A joyous tune! As loud as you are able!  
And let us gather to the festive table.

## Curds and Whey

*(Gives his arm to the Queen; Prince and Princess follow; the others line up in couples behind them. Enter, Absurdus, Superbus, Trott, Feste, and Hugh; they also join the procession round the minstrels on the Tuffet—Hugh comes last carrying the Spider's skin.)*

*All (singing to the joyous tune).*

Little Miss Muffet  
Sat on a tuffet  
Eating curds and whey;  
There came a big spider  
And sat down beside her  
And frightened Miss Muffet away.

But our Princess is found,  
And joy does abound  
Throughout the whole kingdom of Duffet;  
For the spider she feared  
A Prince has appeared,  
*And has fallen in love with Miss Muffet.*

*(They join hands and dance in a circle.)*

CURTAIN

*Margery Barfield*





THE GIDDY



GOAT



## THE LITTLE GNOME WHO HAD A GISSIPY-GOSSIPY KETTLE

**T**HERE was once a little gnome who had a gissipy-gossipy kettle. And he decided to take it far away and sell it to a stranger.

For what used to happen was this: the little gnome would ask a friend to tea, and fill his kettle and set it on the fire. And as soon as the friend was nicely seated, the little gnome's kettle would begin to hum, and then to sing "My master has a hole in his coat", or, "My master burnt his porridge for breakfast", or, "My master got up late this morning".

Now, no one could have that kind of thing happening all the time.

## The Little Gnome who had a Gissipy-gossipy Kettle

So the little gnome packed his kettle in paper, and set it in his round basket, and started for the town.

First of all he had to cross the common. And when he got as far as the Sugar-stick Tree, the kettle began to get worried, and cried out: "Where are we going to, master?"

And the little gnome said: "We are going to the town."

"And what are you going for?" cried the kettle.

Then the little gnome replied: "I am going to buy a new kettle."

"But what is to become of *me*?" cried the gissipy-gossipy kettle.

And the little gnome replied: "I am taking you to the town to sell you to a stranger."

After that everything was quiet for a time, for the gissipy-gossipy kettle was too full of thought to speak.

Now when they reached the Bigger Sugar-stick Tree, the kettle got more worried, and cried out: "I don't want to go to town, master!"

But the little gnome said: "Whatever you say, I mean to go."

"I don't want to be sold to a stranger," cried the gissipy-gossipy kettle.

But the little gnome only said: "Whatever you say, I mean to sell you."

Then the kettle cried: "But why do you mean to sell me, master?"

And the little gnome replied: "Because you are a gissipy-gossipy kettle, quite the worst kind of kettle for a little gnome like me."

After that everything was quiet for a time, for the gissipy-gossipy kettle was too full of grief to speak.

At last the little gnome reached the Biggest Sugar-stick Tree. Then the kettle was *dreadfully* worried, for it saw that the little

## The Little Gnome who had a Gissipy-gossipy Kettle

gnome was in earnest, and it cried out: "Please take me home again, master!"

But the little gnome said: "I have come a long way, and I mean to keep on till I reach the town."

"Can't you hide me under this Biggest Sugar-stick Tree, master," cried the kettle, "and pick me up when you come back again?"

But the little gnome said: "Certainly not! Why, I mean to sell you in the town."

Then the gissipy-gossipy kettle gave a little squeak with pure grief, and cried: "If you will take me home again, master, I will never be a gissipy-gossipy kettle again, never as long as I live!"

When the little gnome heard this promise, he felt greatly pleased, for he didn't really want to part with his kettle, and would



"Can't you hide me under this Biggest Sugar-stick Tree?"

## The Little Gnome who had a Gissipy-gossipy Kettle

never have thought of doing so but for its gissipy-gossipy ways. But he said to himself: "I won't give in at once, lest the gissipy-gossipy kettle should change its mind."

So he said to the kettle: "Once a gissipy-gossipy kettle, *always* a gissipy-gossipy kettle. So I shall take you on my way, and sell you in the town."

And he walked on as far as the Big Green Gate, but that was not very far.

Then the gissipy-gossipy kettle rattled its lid and squeaked.

"Dear me, what is all that noise about?" asked the little gnome.

Then the gissipy-gossipy kettle said in a little sad voice. "I shall never sing again, master, if you sell me to a stranger."

"That is all very well," said the little gnome, "but you will sing gissipy-gossipy songs if I take you back to my kitchen."

But the gissipy-gossipy kettle cried: "That I never would, master."

"Then what kind of songs would you sing?" asked the little gnome.

"Ah!" said the gissipy-gossipy kettle, "take me home, master, and you will see."

Then the little gnome turned and began to trudge home again, singing:

"He really means, I think, to settle,  
And be a nicer kind of kettle."

But the gissipy-gossipy kettle was quiet, for it was too full of joy to speak.

And they passed the Biggest Sugar-stick Tree, and the Bigger Sugar-stick Tree, and the Sugar-stick Tree. Then they came to their own little house; and the little gnome took the gissipy-gossipy kettle from its paper, and filled it with water and set it on the fire.

## The Little Gnome who had a Gissipy-gossipy Kettle

At that moment in came the Pedlar-Elf, and the little gnome said: "Please stay to tea."

So the Pedlar-Elf stayed to tea, and the little gnome brought out cups and saucers; and the kettle hummed and then began to sing:

"It's nice to sing a little song  
When things are right that have been wrong;  
I mean to sing just every day  
Of pleasant things, and bright, and gay."

"Dear me, that is a pleasant song!" said the Pedlar-Elf.  
"Pray, is that a new kettle?"

Then the little gnome was as proud as proud, and said: "No, that is my old kettle, which now sings different songs."

And the kettle heard him and chuckled and chuckled; and it never sang a gissipy-gossipy song again, never as long as it lived!

*Agnes Grozier Herbertson.*

## MAGIC MUSIC

**A**S I crossed over London Bridge  
One lovely morn in June,  
As I crossed over London Bridge  
I heard a magic tune.  
But never a pipe or a harp saw I,  
But dancing water and cloudless sky.  
"Oh, whence may come this melody?"  
I asked myself all wonderingly.  
"Is it river music from far below  
Or echo of pageants of Long Ago?  
Or is it my heart which is singing a tune  
Because I am young and 'tis morning and June?"

*V. E. Hewin.*



## HOSPITAL TREATMENT

YOU are the grateful patient,  
And I 'm the nurse in charge.  
The dose I have to give you  
Is horrid and it 's large;  
But it will be as big again  
If temper you display.  
While, if you 're good, you 'll get a sweet  
To take the taste away.

*Maurice Clifford.*



## JEALOUS JIMMIE

**J**IMMIE, the tortoise, waddled solemnly across the parched lawn in a very bad temper, swinging his lean neck from side to side. Spot, the fox-terrier, lying panting under the sycamore, wondered what was the matter.

"Hello, Jimmie!" he barked, "what's wrong? You look sad this morning."

Jimmie did not answer, but marched past the hollyhocks and the terrace, where Brindle with her three kittens, Popsy, Mopsy, and Tiddlums, lay fast asleep.

The reason for Jimmie's bad temper that hot morning was this. Jimmie loved lettuces, just as children love chocolates and ice-cream. But there had been no rain for weeks, and the lettuces were burnt up. Maisie, his little mistress, managed to get some for

## Jealous Jimmie

him every day, but this morning she had forgotten him. Spot had had a tasty mutton bone, which he was too lazy to enjoy, and the cat and kittens bread-and-milk, but he had had nothing.

His heart was sore under his hard shell, and he wondered how he should punish Maisie. Near the laurel hedge he stopped. "I know what I'll do. I'll hide, and stay hidden ever so long; then she'll be sorry."

Where was the best place: under the rhubarb leaves, or among the thick ivy round the summer-house?

No! he thought of a better plan. He would burrow in the earth if he could find any damp enough.

Searching, he soon found what he wanted, and burrowed in the soil, leaving nothing showing but his eyes and little nose. It was very cosy, and he fell asleep, to be awakened by Maisie calling "Jimmie! where are you?"

He poked up his head cautiously and looked round. There stood Maisie with a juicy lettuce leaf in her hand, the sight of which was almost too much for Jimmie; but he thought he would stay hidden a little longer. Maisie searched all about the garden, calling for her pet. Mother came out just then, and Maisie rushed up to her, saying: "Jimmie's lost, Mummie; I can't find him anywhere. I only ran across to Aunt Mildred's to see if I could get him a lettuce—because he loves them so," and she burst into tears.

"Don't cry, darling; he can't be lost," said Mother. "I'll help you search for him."

"I expect the baker's boy left the gate open," wailed Maisie, "and he's got into the road and been killed by a nasty motor. I shall never see him again!"

Mother helped to look for the lost one, and so did Spot. When they came near Jimmie's hiding-place, he pulled his head

## Jealous Jimmie

down for fear Spot should find him, but he heard all that was said.

"It's no use looking any more," said Maisie sadly.

But her mother answered: "He's sure to turn up, dear; sometimes tortoises bury themselves for weeks; besides, if he were lost, Daddy would soon buy you another."

But Maisie was not to be comforted. "I don't want another one!" she exclaimed. "I only want my dear old Jimmy; I love him best."

This was too much for Jimmie. He began to scramble clumsily out of the hole in the ground. Spot saw the movement and began to bark loudly. "Here he is! here he is!" he seemed to say.

Maisie ran to the place just in time to see Jimmie crawl out, and shake the soil from his neck and head. "Oh! Jimmie dear," she cried, "where have you been? You naughty darling, you did give me such a fright!" and she clasped the dirty and repentant tortoise in her arms and kissed his wrinkled head, and then fed him with the juicy green lettuce leaf, which he thoroughly enjoyed after his burial in the hot earth, Spot, Brindle, and the kittens watching with the greatest interest.

Never again did Jimmie doubt his little mistress's love, as he had so foolishly done that hot July morning.

*Ada M. Stead.*

## THE LINNET'S NEST

**H**ERE'S a nest with four eggs in it  
Laid by darling Mrs. Linnet.

Come and peep, but do not stay:  
We won't frighten her away.

*Ethel Talbot.*

## DRESSED UP



NE day, last Christmas-time, Teddy and Herbert and I had nothing to do. Herbert is our small brother. I am Milicent—Millie for short—and we have an elder sister whose name is Ermyntrude, but we always call her Minnie. Our father is a doctor, and we live in London.

Well, on this afternoon Dad and Mother were from home, and Minnie had gone to pay calls. She had on her nicest clothes and looked ever so smart. "Be good children," she said as she went out, "and don't get into any mischief."

Teddy nudged me. "Millie," he said, "she isn't wearing it."

"Wearing what?" I asked.

"Her new watch," he replied—"the one Grandpapa gave her. Let's have a peep at it!"

So upstairs we stole, and into Minnie's room. We couldn't find the watch, though we opened several drawers, but we found lots of other lovely things—frocks, and hats, and coats, and shoes, and yards and yards of ribbon.

"Let's try them on," I whispered; and soon we were busy dressing up. I chose a beautiful red coat, and a red hat with bright green trimming; and Herbert found an even larger hat, which made him look like a fairy hiding under a mushroom.

"This is some sport!" cried Teddy. "Don't you wish we could pay calls like Ermyntrude?"

"Next door," I exclaimed; "why not? The Major would love to see us!" (Major Ford is one of Dad's patients, and he is most awfully kind.)

"He might give us some chocolates," cried Herbert, prancing; whereupon Minnie's big hat slipped over his nose like a tea-cosy. But we stuffed it with paper to make it fit, and when I had dressed him up



DRESSED UP

## Dressed Up

in one of my old party frocks he looked a perfectly darling little girl.

Teddy chose a purple coat—miles too long—and borrowed one of Dad's silk hats; and I found a pair of pale-blue satin slippers that made my feet just a dream. But they were rather wobbly to walk in!

When we were ready, we squeezed through the railing between Major Ford's house and ours. We knew the page-boy next door, and hoped he would let us in.

And he did. "Bless my buttons!" he cried, when he saw us, "'ere's a peep-show!" And then he took us right up to the drawing-room, and bawled out: "MR. and the MISSES HARRINGTON!" How the Major laughed when he saw us!

"Bravo! Bravo!" he cried, "you impudent chicks! Whatever do you mean by it?" And then he laughed again, and ordered up tea and chocolates—a whole box of them.

He said he was delighted to see us (he is such a dear!), and he asked me to pour out tea. We were having the time of our lives, when, all at once, the door opened, and in walked Ermyntrude!

"Children, you here!" she exclaimed; and then she caught sight of our clothes and just seemed to freeze.

"We—we've been dressing up, Minnie," I murmured weakly.

"So I perceive," she replied.

"It almost goes without saying—eh, Minnie?" said the Major; and then Herbert saved us all.

"Minnie," he cried, "those are Mum's beads you have on!"

"And that is Mother's sunshade," I added quickly, "and Mother's gold hat-pin too!"

"Yes," said Minnie, turning pink all over, "I—I borrowed them—just for to-day."

"Then you are *all* dressed up," said the Major; "so you had better cry quits!" And after that Minnie was not cross any more.

*Marie Bayne.*

# FANNY'S GREAT-AUNT SUSAN

FANNY, a curly-pated maid,  
With Great-aunt Susan often stayed.  
Aunt Susan's house was square and squat  
As an old-fashioned pepper-pot.  
Its little crooked back stairs led  
Up to a dark room overhead,  
Where Fanny crept to sniff and sniff.  
For, oh! she loved the jolly whiff  
From pears and apples, cheese and ham,  
And quite a million pots of jam.  
The house had cupboards twenty-three  
(Fanny had counted them to see).  
In each by turn she hid because  
Sometimes her Great-aunt Susan was  
A wicked witch who chased her, quick  
Tap-a-tap tapping with her stick.  
And Fanny, still as mouse, must lie  
While tap-a-tap the stick went by.



Helen Jacobs

## Fanny's Great-aunt Susan



Sometimes Aunt Susan was a ship;  
Her skirts were sails to bend and dip.  
With Fanny as her tug she went  
To foreign shores in great content.  
She sailed the lonesome icy seas  
To buy some oil from Mister Breeze.  
To purchase spice from Grocer Dale  
'Mong palm-tree islands she would sail.  
What risks from pirate ships she ran  
In visiting the butcher man!  
Sometimes as smuggler, secretly,  
She filled her holds with silk or tea.  
Then back from China-land or Spain  
Fanny would tug her home again.  
And Great-aunt Susan never knew  
The wild adventures she'd been through.

*Hylda C. Cole.*



DOWN IN THE FOREST

# THE BARGAIN



ING BOMBOSO lay terribly sick with a tooth-ache. Indeed, his face was swelled to twice its usual size. Physicians and enchanters had been summoned to the castle, and they came by the score, but not one of them had been able to cure the ailing monarch.

As the King lay in his great four-post bed, hugging his aching head and groaning, a breathless page rushed into the royal bed-chamber.

“Your Majesty, your Majesty!” he cried. “A young man has just knocked at the castle gate, and he says he can cure your Majesty’s toothache.”

When the King heard these words, he jumped out of bed in his fine dressing-gown of purple velvet, with slippers to match, and danced round the room, so happy was he.

## The Bargain

“Ask the young stranger to come in at once,” he commanded the page in a muffled voice, for his cheek had been covered with a camomile poultice by the last old fairy who had attempted to cure him. “And tell the young man that if he succeeds in ridding me of this horrible toothache, I will give him ten thousand ducats, *or* my daughter’s hand in marriage, as a reward.”

Now, the youth who had come to the castle gate was none other than Ferado, a Prince who had been banished from his country—and for a strange reason. The Emperor of Palony, his father, wished him to wed Melliflora, the daughter of a poor but faithful knight. The young man had never beheld this damsel. He had falsely heard, however, that she was plain, ill-mannered, and so sulky that she would not utter a word. Had Ferado but known the truth, he would have loved Melliflora dearly, for she was gentle as she was beautiful. Unfortunately, however, the Prince believed the rumour that had come to his ears. Therefore he said to his father:

“I wish a delicately nurtured Princess of high degree to become my Queen.”

“Very well, my son,” answered the old Emperor. “Since there is no lady fine enough to please you in my country, you had better leave it.”

And that is why Prince Ferado wandered forth disguised as a poor pedlar, and how he came to the castle of King Bomboso. Luckily the youth had been brought up by a nurse who was a wise woman, and who understood how all manner of ills might be cured with herbs and spells. Some of her secrets she had revealed to Ferado, and one of the magic potions he had learned to make was a certain cure for toothache.

When the young man entered the royal bedchamber, he found the King and his beautiful daughter awaiting him. The Princess

## The Bargain

merely curtsied haughtily to the supposed pedlar, but he was welcomed with the greatest joy by King Bomboso.

“The sooner you perform the cure, the sooner will the ten thousand ducats be yours,” said he.

“I thank your gracious Majesty,” answered Ferado, “but I do not want the gold for reward; rather would I have the hand of your fair daughter.”

“Certainly, certainly; you honour us!” said King Bomboso. But though he spoke thus, he felt very cross indeed when he heard the young man’s words, for he did not wish a poor pedlar to become his son-in-law.

As for the Princess, she felt even more indignant than her



The Princess curtsied haughtily

## The Bargain

father, for she was very proud. Both she and the old King hid their annoyance, however.

"For," whispered the monarch to his daughter, "when this impudent young jackanapes has cured my toothache, we will order our varlets to cast him from the castle."

The Prince now drew a little flask of charmed water from his wallet, and, spilling a few drops of the liquid upon the floor, he uttered a spell. Hardly had he done so than King Bomboso felt the pain and swelling of his toothache suddenly disappear. Of course he was delighted to find that his jaw no longer throbbed, and that he was hale and strong once more. Shouting with joy, he tore the camomile poultice from his cheek and flung it up to the ceiling. This ungrateful old man had no thought of rewarding the Prince, however.

"Come hither!" he cried to his serving-men. "Come hither! Seize this impudent rascal and cast him out by the postern gate."

In vain Ferado reasoned with the old monarch, and besought him to remember his promise. Bomboso only flew into a terrible rage, and stamped round the room, while the Princess called the young man rude names.

"Very well," said the Prince at last. "I will leave your castle, ungrateful monarch, but before I go I will tell you some news. Your face was swelled to the size of a melon before I came to you. Now, because you have broken your promise, it will swell to the size of a great pumpkin, and your daughter's cheek also. So says the information on the bottle. If you don't believe me, read the directions and warning on the label yourself. And now I wish you both a very good day."

And indeed the Prince had spoken truly. Hardly had he left the room than the King's face began to ache in a terrible fashion, and it swelled till it became the size of a pumpkin.



"I WILL LEAVE YOUR CASTLE, UNGRATEFUL MONARCH"

## The Bargain

As for the Princess, she uttered a cry of dismay, then putting her hands to her throbbing head, she ran weeping from the bedchamber.

For a little while King Bomboso suffered the toothache in silence, but soon he could bear the pain no longer. Rushing to the window, he leaned out, and calling to the Emperor's son, who was just about to cross the drawbridge below, he besought him to have mercy.

"Come back, come back, kind youth," he cried, "and I will give you whatever you wish."

At first the Prince would not return, but the old man's cries moved his heart to pity. So at last he mounted the castle stair once more, and stood again in the presence of the suffering monarch. Drawing forth the little flask, Ferado spilt some of the magic liquid and uttered the spell for the second time. As he did so, King Bomboso sank into a chair with a sigh of relief, for again the horrid pain and swelling had vanished from his jaw.

"Noble young man, no reward is too great for you," he cried. "You shall have the hand of my daughter, and a thousand treasures besides."

Ferado would have answered this gracious speech, but at this instant he was astonished to hear a terrible sound of sobbing and screaming which echoed from a neighbouring chamber and grew ever louder. Then the door flew open, and a lady-in-waiting, white and trembling and holding her fingers to her ears, rushed into the presence of King Bomboso.

"What is that terrible sound I hear?" asked the Prince, who was very much alarmed, for he feared the castle was on fire.

"That is my mistress, the Princess, with a toothache," answered the waiting-lady humbly.

The young man became quite pale. "And does she always

## The Bargain

scream like that when she has a pain?" shouted he; for the clamour had now become so loud that he could scarcely hear the sound of his own voice.

"Of course she does," replied the maiden in surprise. "My mistress can scream beautifully, even more beautifully than she is screaming at present. When she pricks her fingers with a rose thorn, she screams ten times more wonderfully than for a mere toothache or headache."

"And do you scream like that too?" asked the poor Prince, becoming more and more frightened and bewildered.

"Certainly not!" interrupted the old King indignantly. "Why, *she* is only the daughter of a poor knight—Melliflora, a humble waiting-lady, most happily accustomed to all manner of discomforts and hard knocks since the day she was born. Indeed, she is so dull-witted that she does not even cry out when my gracious daughter beats her with her own royal hand. And you ask whether this poor simple creature can scream beautifully like my child who has a wonderful voice! No, *my* daughter is a delicately nurtured Princess of such high degree that she suffers tortures even when a cherry falls upon her from the tree."

When the young man heard these words, he flung himself at the feet of Bomboso. "Your Majesty," he cried, "I beseech you to allow me to change my mind. Give me, I pray thee, ten thousand ducats instead of your daughter's hand in marriage."

When he heard the youth speak thus, King Bomboso's face fell, and he looked at him gloomily. Since the old monarch's toothache had been cured for the second time, he had begun to understand how useful Ferado might be to him when he became his son-in-law. "While he dwells at the castle I need never suffer from this horrible pain again," said the old sovereign to himself.

## The Bargain

At last, however, fearing to offend this powerful young man, who, instead of helping him, might even cause the toothache to return, if his wishes were not satisfied, the monarch replied rather crossly: "Certainly, certainly!" And drawing a purse of gold from the pocket of his dressing-gown, he handed it to Ferado.

"How can I thank your Majesty?" cried the Prince gratefully, scrambling to his feet. "Sire, accept, I pray, this phial of magic liquid in token of my gratitude. The instructions on the bottle will inform you how you may cure your noble daughter's sufferings in an instant."

And the old monarch needed not twice telling. The loud screams of the Princess were making him feel confused and giddy. Seizing the bottle, without more ado he rushed from the room and hastened to the chamber of his unhappy child, whose toothache he charmed away in a trice.

Ferado now turned to the waiting-lady, and bowing low he presented her with the purse full of ducats.

"Madam," he said humbly, "accept, I pray you, this small gift from me for the relief of that good knight, your father. Accept also, I beseech you, my humblest thanks for having taught me that the daughter of a poor knight would indeed make a better match for me than a fine Princess, delicately nurtured. You see before you a humble pedlar, but one who knows you to be the fairest and gentlest lady in the land. I came here this day seeking a bride. If, indeed, you are as good and gentle as you appear to be, do not deem me presuming if I ask the honour of your hand in marriage. But if my words displease you, dismiss me, and I will depart and never again return to this castle."

Melliflora, who thought she had never before beheld a youth

## The Bargain

handsomer than Ferado, and now knew him to be generous and kind-hearted, gladly consented to become his bride.

Then the young man told her all his story, and you may imagine the maiden's surprise when she heard the tale, and learned that she was to become the wife, not of a poor pedlar, but of a great Prince.

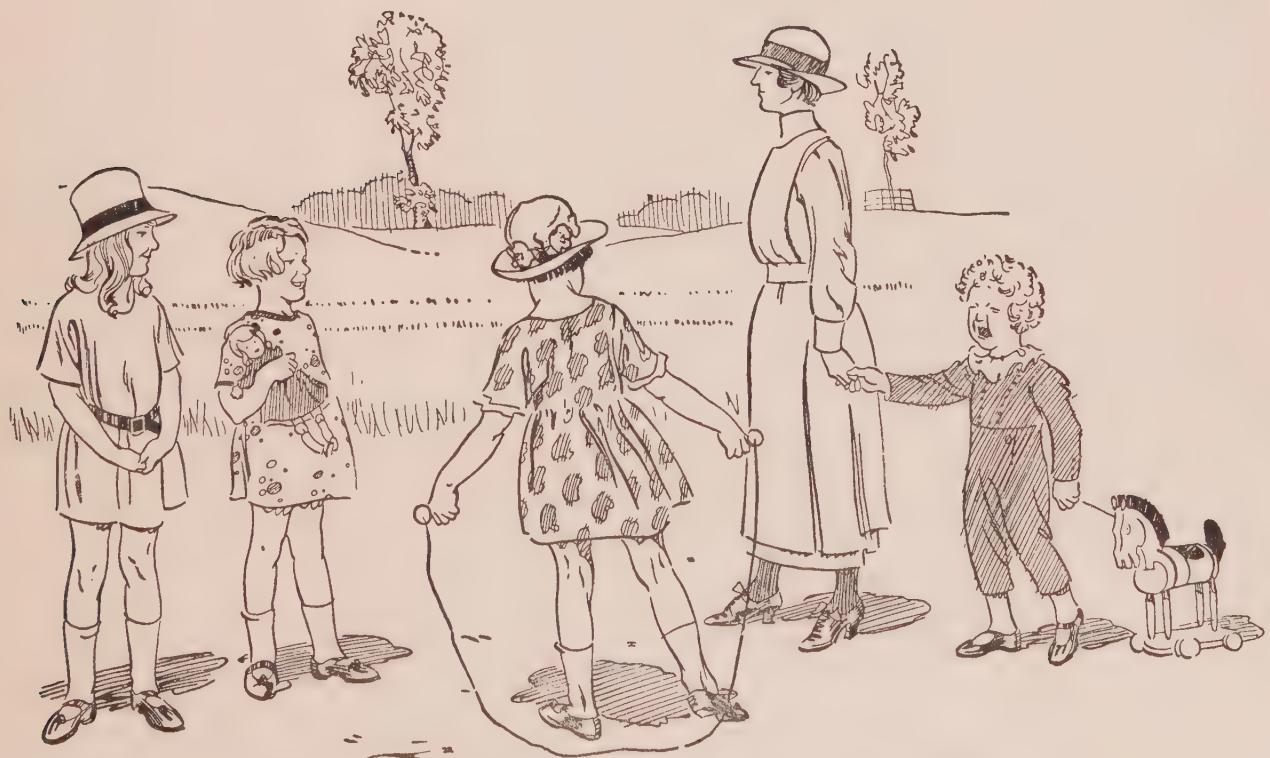
"I will hasten homewards now," said he. "But in three days' time I will return with a following of lords and ladies to attend upon you, and bring you to the castle of my father."

And this he did.

Of course, the old Emperor of Palony was delighted when he learned that the Prince had discovered Melliflora, and now knew how gentle and sweet-natured was this maiden.

"You are wiser than I thought you were, my son," said he.

*Audrey Dayne.*



The Cry-baby

R. B. NELSON

## AN ADVENTURE

**B**ITSIE-BOY and Mopsie-Mo  
Thought it would be grand to go  
Climbing up the hill so steep,  
When they ought to be asleep.

Half-way up the hill they found  
Mr. Moon, so large and round,  
Shining with a cold, queer light—  
Bits and Mops weren't comfy, quite.

Still they climbed, and would not stop  
Till they reached the very top.  
Poor old Bitsie sucked his thumb;  
Mopsie wished she hadn't come.

Two black bats came flying close  
Round their heads and round their toes;  
Then an owl began to hoot—  
Down the hill the children scoot—

Scoot across the field for home.  
Never more at night they'll roam;  
That's what Bits and Mopsie said  
When they both were tucked in bed.

*Jessie Pope.*



ck  
H. COWHAN

AN ADVENTURE



## THE FIERY DRAGON

**D**O you ever see a dragon  
Made of shining golden light,  
Long and swift and fiercely gleaming,  
Sometimes panting, sometimes screaming,  
Rushing through the dark at night,  
Breathing fire and smoke around it,  
As St. George, our hero, found it,  
When he rode his charger round it,  
Just before he won the fight?

*I* have seen one very often  
Through my nursery window pane,  
Creeping onward, moving quickly,  
Flames and smoke-clouds bursting thickly,  
Racing on with might and main;  
And my knees begin to quiver,  
And I wonder, as I shiver,  
Shall I see St. George deliver  
England from her foe again!  
Nurse says it's imagination,  
'Cos our home is near a station,  
And there *are* none in creation,  
And my dragon is—a train!

*Mildred C. Squires*

# THE CROOKED BILLET

**M**ARGARET SCOTT and Margaret Dixon were two little girls whose friends called them Meg and Peggy. Meg had grown-up sisters, but Peggy was an only child, so they were nearly always together, and were great friends.

The garden at Meg's home was a delightful one; at the farther end was a white gate, and going through this one came first to the kitchen garden, where fruit trees and bushes grew, as well as vegetables; beyond this was the tennis lawn, and still farther on a high sloping bank on which were some large trees.

In one corner of the kitchen garden was a hut in which lived an old billie-goat belonging to a neighbour called Mr. Bowles. Meg's father had very kindly given the old gentleman permission to house Billie in this shed, and there he had lived for a long time.

Meg and Peggy were rather naughty sometimes, and they would lean over the half-door of the hut and tease Billie with their sticks or tennis-racquets. He would bear it quite well for a while, then he would rise on his hind legs and butt at the children, who scampered away, shouting with laughter.

One July evening the children were lying on a rug on the sloping bank, tired after tennis.

"Don't go to sleep, Peggy," said Meg. "I want to talk. I'm so glad it's half-holiday to-morrow. Let's think of something nice to do."

"I know," answered Peggy. "I have a book called *Our Island Home*. It's all about six boys who were wrecked, and they had a glorious time. Let's pretend we're wrecked and fight wild animals and cannibals, and the kitchen garden can be the ship we go to for stores. A ship always is close to shore in the story-books!"



THE CROOKED BILLET

## The Crooked Billet

“Lovely!” said Meg, and added with a sigh: “you always have such good ideas, Peggy-legs.”

“Meg, Meg, Peggy!” called a voice in the distance, “come in to supper, and bring the rug; the dew is falling.”

“What is the programme for to-morrow, children?” asked Mr. Scott during supper.

“We are going to be wrecked on a desert island, and shoot wild beasts,” answered Meg.

“Wild beasts, indeed!” laughed her father. “The pair of you would run away if you met a peaceful-looking cow.”

“Oh, Daddie,” exclaimed the indignant Meg, “we shouldn’t run. Peggy and I met five cows on the Downs the other day, and one put her head down and moo-ed at Peggy’s red hat-band, and we didn’t take the least notice.”

“Capital,” said Mr. Scott; “but I can’t remember learning at school that wild beasts are found on desert islands.”

“They will be on ours,” cried Peggy gaily; then she said “Good-bye” and ran home.

The next afternoon two little figures, in pink linen frocks, emerged from the kitchen garden, each carefully carrying a large cabbage leaf full of raspberries.

“It is sad to be so far from home,” sighed Meg, in her new character of shipwrecked mariner.

“It is fearfully lonesome,” answered Peggy, her mouth full of raspberries. Then, becoming herself again: “Let’s put the raspberries up in the ‘Crooked Billet’, or there won’t be enough left to keep us alive till we are rescued.”

The Crooked Billet was a gnarled and twisted old oak tree growing on the slope beyond the lawn. Many years ago it had been struck by lightning, and it leaned over at such an angle that the children could clamber easily up the trunk and perch securely in

## The Crooked Billet

the forking branches. They named this retreat their "little green drawing-room".

When the raspberries had been deposited in the tree, the children set out on a voyage of discovery, carrying sticks to serve as guns.

"Hush-sh!" whispered Peggy, staring at a clump of bracken. "In yonder dense undergrowth I see two eyes gleaming. In one moment a tiger will spring upon us."

"Courage, comrade," replied the undaunted Meg. "Let us strike first if we would see our homes once more." They crept towards the fern, and with loud shouts slew the enemy. Peggy drew some string from her pocket and measured the monster.

"Twenty feet from nose to tail," she announced proudly.

Two hyenas and a golden eagle completed the bag, and the thoughts of the wearied castaways turned towards refreshment.

Suddenly Meg seized Peggy's arm and gasped: "Oh, Peggy, look, look!"

Over the distant lawn careered a strange grey form, gambolling and prancing on the turf; then, dashing over the net, it headed for the terrified tiger-slayers under the trees.

"Run, Peggy, run!" shrieked Meg. "Billie has got loose, and he will remember how we teased him;" and as fast as their legs could carry them the children tore to the Crooked Billet and scrambled up to their favourite seat.

They were only just in time. No sooner were they safe in the green drawing-room than Billie reached the tree, rearing and plunging awkwardly on the grass beneath them.

The children peeped down at him. "I am glad goats can't climb," said Peggy, when she had recovered her breath.

Soon Billie lay down, and munched contentedly at something he discovered in the grass.

## The Crooked Billet

“We shall have to stay here till Mr. Bowles comes to look for him,” said Meg. “Oh, I wish we hadn’t played this horrid island game!”

“Don’t be cross, Meggums,” said Peggy. “Let’s eat our raspberries to fill up the time.”

Meg burst into tears.

“Oh, Peggy, you never saw the *awful* thing that happened when I climbed up. The leaves were balanced on the fork and I knocked them over, and Billie is eating them up.”

Peggy groaned. She was a good-natured child, but this was the last straw.

“How silly to be frightened of an old goat,” she said. “If you hadn’t run away, he wouldn’t have chased us.”

“Oh Peggy, how mean!” wept poor Meg. “You ran as fast as I did.”

“Well,” returned Peggy, “but I didn’t knock the raspberries over.”

Two hours passed slowly. Billie, tired with unusual exercise, dozed peacefully beneath the tree.

The children had just decided they must pass the night in the Crooked Billet, when Peggy saw a figure in the kitchen garden. “Shout, Meg!” she cried. “It’s Mr. Bowles;” and “Mr. Bowles, Mr. Bowles, Mr. Bow-ow-ow-les!” they yelled, nearly toppling from the tree in their excitement.

Mr. Bowles gazed round in all directions.

“Here!” screamed Meg. “It’s Meg and Peggy up in the Crooked Billet, and we daren’t come down because of Billie.”

The old gentleman ran towards them.

“Well I never! Well—well I’m sure!” he cried, laughing heartily as he saw the woebegone little faces peering down. “Fancy being afraid of old Billie, my dears; he’s as gentle as a

## The Crooked Billet

lamb—he only wanted to play. Why, he used to follow my little Pollie about like a dog."

He helped the tired children down, and then led Billie away to the hut.

"Was the play a success?" asked Meg's father later, with a twinkle in his eyes.

The children looked at each other in silence.

Mr. Scott laughed.

"I heard a funny story from Mr. Bowles about a goat chasing two shipwrecked mariners into a tree. The next time you and Peggy go on the Downs, Meg, take me too. *I want to see you pass those five cows.*"

*Constance Frost.*

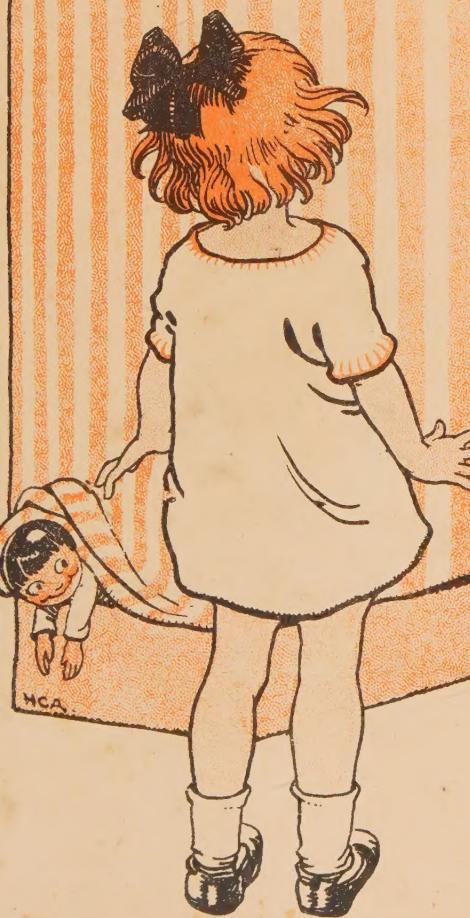




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